

Update to the Council on the Interim Supervision Policy

Contact Name and Details	The Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler, Assistant Secretary of the Conference asc@methodistchurch.org.uk
Resolution	63/1. The Council receives the report. 63/2. The Council authorises the publication of the guidelines following appropriate professional advice on changes to contracts of employment. 63/3. The Council authorises the Strategy and Resources Committee to oversee the approval of the Connexional Team Supervision Implementation Plan.

The Council received a report in January (MC/19/16) from the Supervision Reference Group on the implementation of the Interim Supervision Policy in circuit and district appointments. That policy, agreed by the Conference in 2017, applied to all presbyters and deacons and 'does not currently extend to lay employees in pastoral roles.'¹ However, the Districts and Circuits were 'encouraged to explore ways of achieving this as soon as possible.' The report to the Conference also envisaged that 'following further consultation supervision will be extended to apply in appropriate form to ordained ministers in the Connexional Team.'

The report to the Council in January highlighted that if the Church's policy and practice are to be consistent and safe, there should also be consideration of the extension of supervision to certain lay roles in the Connexional Team and the senior leadership of the Church. The Council agreed that further work needed to be done in this area and was promised an update in April (see paragraph 3.5 of MC/19/16).

The following draft guidelines, therefore, are offered for those responsible for completing Supervision Implementation Plans. With the Council's approval, these guidelines will be included in briefing and training material along with further guidance from Human Resources about processes where changes to contracts need to be made.

Once the Council authorises the policy for lay employees/office holders, the Senior Managers in the Connexional Team will finalise the Connexional Team Implementation Plan. The Council is asked to delegate to the SRC responsibility for the oversight of that piece of work.

***RESOLUTIONS

- 63/1. The Council receives the report.**
- 63/2. The Council authorises the publication of the guidelines following appropriate professional advice on changes to contracts of employment.**
- 63/3. The Council authorises the Strategy and Resources Committee to oversee the approval of the Connexional Team Supervision Implementation Plan.**

¹ Agenda (2017) p166

Guidelines for Supervision in respect of Lay Employees and Office Holders

By 1 September 2020 the Methodist Church expects that all its ordained ministers will be in supervision in accordance with its [Supervision Policy](#).

From 1 September 2020 the Methodist Church, in accordance with its Supervision Policy the Methodist Church requires that the following lay office holders and lay employees should be in supervision:

- Those who hold significant public representative roles
- Those who have significant pastoral contact
- Those who bear responsibilities in which there are significant risks to them, those amongst whom they work or the health of the Church that would benefit from exploratory supervision
- Those who supervise for the Methodist Church under the policy

These guidelines are designed to help you decide which people within your team are required to receive supervision under the policy and to help you set up supervision with lay employees and office holders.

➤ **Which roles should be supervised under the policy?**

There are many offices in the life of the church that could benefit from some exploratory supervision. For example, those who are class leaders, junior church leaders, or who lead cell groups or are church or circuit stewards, might benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their work, its aims, the difficult issues they face and the impact of the work upon them. In general it is recommended that consideration is given to ways in which reflective space can be introduced into their practice in ways that do not require formal 1:1 supervision under the policy.

There are also offices in the life of the church that are significant and require management or support but would not normally be supported through exploratory supervision. This is particularly true where the focus of the role is not primarily on working with people, e.g. treasurers, church council secretaries, administrators.

In order to determine whether a role requires formal supervision under the policy please look at the job descriptions and person specifications for the role and consider:

➤ **Does this role carry public representative authority to lead in the name of the Methodist Church?**

Whilst many jobs have public facing responsibilities, eg in a circuit or district office, what is indicated here are roles where the office holder by virtue of their role would be invested with the personal authority to speak and act in the name of the Methodist Church and to have the responsibility to interpret the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Church beyond the local congregation. They may have significant strategic and or management responsibility. They will be in roles in which they are treated as a leader and so be expected to answer for the Church and deal at times with complaints (formal or informal), confidential information, conflict and complex dynamics. They will need to be attentive to the theological and spiritual direction of the Church, to the integrity and reputation of the Church, to their use of power and to the impact of bearing the weight of the expectations of others.

➤ **Does this role confer pastoral authority?**

Pastoral 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 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 as they work. They will 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.

➤ **Does this role involve significant 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 will 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 might fall under this definition depending on their job descriptions.

➤ **Is this lay person supervising under the policy as a volunteer?**

The Methodist Church welcomes lay supervisors who either have external qualifications that have been validated by the Connexional Director of Supervision or who have been trained and approved by the Methodist Church. Lay people with professional level qualifications and/or external accreditation e.g. by APSE or BACP who act as external supervisors and who are paid either by the Connexion or the District or the Circuit are expected under their terms and conditions to access and pay for their own supervision. Lay people who offer their time and skills as internal supervisors will need to be supervised under the policy. If this is the only work they do for which supervision is required reference should be made to the [guidelines in the policy](#).

➤ **What are the practical steps that need to be taken to set up supervision for a lay employee or office holder?**

1. 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.
2. For lay employees this will need to be a contractual obligation, counted within their working hours and proportionate to their working hours. Guidelines for part time working are available.
3. To require supervision of a lay employee will necessitate a change in a contract or terms and conditions. This can be done by renegotiation at any time in a line management meeting and employers are encouraged to seek authorisation for revised contracts from the District Lay Employment Subcommittee. If the employee resists the change, advice should be sought from the Connexional Team.
4. When drawing up new job descriptions, roles that fall under the policy should make it clear that to be in supervision under the policy is a part of the work.