

Workloads of Governance Bodies and the Connexional Team

Basic Information

Contact Name and Details	John Ellis, Secretary for Connexional Team Operations, Strategic Leaders Office, ellisj@methodistchurch.org.uk , Ext. 5297
Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	To note
Draft Resolution	None
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	None

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This paper provides an update on the discussion at the April Council on Workloads
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Workloads are placing excessive strain on Governance Bodies and the Team and affecting the quality of work. • Several discussions with interested parties have been held including at the Connexional Leaders Forum. • A more substantial report will be brought to the January Council.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Dave Warnock’s paper to April 2010 Council on Workloads and Well-being.
Consultations	Chair of the Council and members of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	The relevant Standing Orders are SO 211, 212 and 213
Faith and Order	
Financial	
Personnel	Current workloads are unsustainable and have become a well-being issue.
Legal	
Wider Connexional	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	
Risk	

Workloads of Governance Bodies and the Connexional Team

1. Members of the Methodist Church's Governance Bodies and Connexional Team have expressed concern about current challenges in meeting their work commitments. David Warnock's paper to the April 2010 Council argued that current workloads are having a detrimental effect, not only on the Council but on the work of the Team and the wider Church and made a number of suggestions to bring this work pattern under control.

2. Both the April and the September meetings of the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) considered this question but - perhaps appropriately - ran out of time.

3. In parallel, a dialogue between Connexional Team leaders and the Chairs of the SRC and the Council revealed a general consensus as regards two key propositions:

i) The Connexional Team is producing too much paperwork and the whole Connexional machinery needs to do less work but more efficiently and purposefully;

ii) The ongoing reluctance to prioritise and delegate is connected with the lack of trust towards the Team and towards other Governance Bodies.

4. The discussion has also noted a broader issue: the need and desire to improve the entire administrative framework of the Methodist Church as rapidly as possible may, in the short term, be leading to a vicious circle of increased burdens, leading to decreased efficiency, leading to calls for more urgent remedial work.

5. At the Conference, the workload issue was alluded to in several reports and highlighted by an intervention by the Revd Dr Brian Beck concerning his perceptions of excessive workloads in what he called the Conference Office. The topic has also featured in the *Recorder* at the paper's initiative.

6. The Council will wish to note that the Chair of the SRC, Ken Wales, and the Assistant Secretary of Conference, Ken Howcroft, are preparing to review the Standing Orders relating to the role of the SRC and that work and wider work on workloads need to be taken forward in parallel.

7. The SRC also hopes to bring to the Council some outcomes from an evaluation of the Team Focus process. Several of the recommendations arising from this are also pertinent to the wider discussion of workloads and the respective roles of different Governance Bodies. This in turn impacts on the appropriate level of resources for the Connexional Team.