

CANDIDATING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

G.18 GUIDANCE FOR DISTRICT CANDIDATES' SECRETARIES 2020-2021

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking on this vital role in the life of the Church. You will find that colleagues in your district will approach you with questions about the candidating process – if the information is not readily available in CPD or on the candidating webpage, please feel free to contact the Connexional Team candidates' office (candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk) who will be happy to help.

This paper is an attempt to draw together the information available on the Methodist Church website [here](#) and the requirements of CPD in order to highlight the role of the District Candidates' Secretary in the candidating process. This paper is to be read in conjunction with the other documents available on the website.

2. PREPARATION OF CANDIDATES

- 2.1. Candidates make their offer on the C.1 Candidates' Application form which is obtained by the candidate emailing the Candidates' Office. Requests for the C.1 must be made by 31st August 2020.
- 2.2. Hopefully, the candidate will already have been in touch with you either directly or through their Superintendent well before registering their interest. You may want to encourage them to attend a vocations day (your Regional Learning Network will be able to provide information). There are also Connexional 'Exploring Ordained Ministry' Days. See [here](#) for information.
- 2.3. There is no doubt that candidates who have had time and opportunities to think about and reflect on what it means to be an ordained minister are much clearer in their responses at the district and connexional selection committees. This is especially so when they have been encouraged to reflect on their life and hope for ministry in relation to what God is saying to them. Any opportunities to engage in theological reflection are extremely helpful. It is vitally important that they have read and reflected on G.2 What is a Deacon? and G.3 What is a Presbyter?
- 2.4. When a prospective candidate receives the C.1 Candidates' Application form, that e-mail is copied to the Superintendent and to you. The Superintendent is then responsible for convening a four way meeting with the Candidate, District Candidates Secretary and Regional Learning Network Officer to draft out an individual support map (see G.8 Supporting a Candidate (4 Way Meeting) Guidance).
- 2.5. Sometimes candidates are concerned that they have things in their past about which they are embarrassed or ashamed, and that they believe may prohibit them from entering ordained ministry. If these are criminal matters, then the appendix of the C.1 Candidates' Application form lays out the Methodist Church's policy and

guidelines in these situations. If these are not criminal matters, it is helpful if candidates feel able to talk about them, and if they would find it hard to do that in their own circuit, they may appreciate support from you.

- 2.6. There are, in fact, very few things that can exclude someone from offering for ordained ministry – dishonesty or disingenuousness in the candidating process being one of them. Selection committees are likely to be more interested in a candidate's attitude to the matter concerned, than in the original thing itself.
- 2.7. The Methodist Church welcomes candidates of all backgrounds, situations and cultures. It is clear that God calls all sorts of people into ordained ministry. Please help us be open to the possibilities God offers.
- 2.8. The Candidates' Selection Committees are looking for as objective and independent a view of the candidate as possible. However, Methodism is a small world and sometimes it can be quite hard for people to be impartial. (For guidance on confidentiality and conflicts of interest see G.17 Protocols for Members of Candidates' Selection Committees). Consequently, it can be very helpful for a candidate to experience and get feedback from contexts where they are not well known. It is also essential that individuals signing the various forms and those supporting candidates in any official role are not related to the candidate.

3. REQUIREMENTS (these are set out in detail in G.6 'Steps in Candidating')

- 3.1. All candidates, diaconal or presbyteral, need to have been members in good standing of the Methodist Church in Britain for three years by 30th September 2020.
- 3.2. Candidates for presbyteral ministry shall be a local preacher. They must be fully accredited by 1st February 2021. Note that this will be the first Connexional year when this will be implemented.
- 3.3. Candidates for diaconal ministry shall have completed an approved worship leaders' programme by 1st February 2021. This means that diaconal candidates have to have been welcomed as a Worship Leader by September 2017 or completed (and had assessed) the Worship Leader Portfolio or Portfolio A of the 'Worship Leading and Preaching' course which must be submitted not later than 30th September 2020 (because the next submission date would take them beyond the 1st February deadline). Some candidates for diaconal ministry are already Local Preachers, which incorporates this requirement.
- 3.4. Unless an exemption is granted, candidates must be willing to be stationed for a minimum period of ten years in the active work (see SO 710(5)).
- 3.5. For the process for presbyters and deacons who feel called to change to a different order of ministry, see SO 718.

4. CANDIDATING PROCESS Please read G.6 Steps in Candidating for the full picture. However, the key areas for you are as follows:

- 4.1. Candidates in your district will hopefully make contact with you long before the deadline of their C.1 Candidates' Application form (2 October 2020). If so, please ensure that they have requested a C.1 application from the Candidates' Office copying in their DCS and Superintendent by 30 August 2020, and completed and returned this by 2 October 2020. (otherwise, the Connexional Team will be unable to accept the candidate's application).
- 4.2. Candidates will be able to request an application form from 25 May 2020.
- 4.3. The candidates' office will contact you early in October to confirm the identities of candidates from within your district who have registered their intention to offer for ordained ministry.
- 4.4. Presbyteral ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain is usually itinerant. If, under exceptional circumstances, a presbyteral candidate believes that he or she will have severely limited geographical deployability in his or her first appointment, ensure the candidate has spoken with his or her Superintendent, and ensure the District Chair is aware (as they will need to complete a C.1.2 Severely Limited Deployment Form and return it by 2 October 2020).
- 4.5. As soon as you are aware of a candidate in your district, liaise with his or her Superintendent and the Learning Network officer to identify a Portfolio Mentor to assist the candidate. Some districts have a pool of people on which they draw for this. The C.2 Candidating Portfolio Guidance speaks of 'someone in ministry or training'. We mean the widest possible definition of 'ministry' and 'training': it can include all kinds of people who teach or supervise others.
- 4.6. The Portfolio Mentor needs to be someone who, in your judgement, will be able to act as a 'critical friend' to the candidate as he or she prepares the portfolio. Details can be found in G.10 Guidance for Portfolio Mentors.
- 4.7. Encourage the candidate to attend a portfolio day with their Mentor. Some District Candidates' Secretaries find it helpful to attend one of these days, but it is not compulsory.
- 4.8. Encourage candidates also to attend an Open Day at the Queen's Foundation to discuss training pathways – the date in 2020 is Saturday 17 October.
- 4.9. As part of the portfolio, the candidate needs to undertake a placement where they observe someone engaging in the form of ministry for which they are offering. This should be identified in the four-way meeting. It is best practice for it to take place in a circuit context with which the candidate is unfamiliar. You will be informed of any changes to this due to the impact of the coronavirus in 2020.
- 4.10. Sometimes, candidates have not been in formal employment or training during the past five years and so cannot provide a referee from a job or educational

establishment. They must provide a referee to whom they have been formally responsible, but this can be for work within the Church (eg the Junior Church Team Leader).

- 4.11. You are responsible for ensuring that any reasonable adjustments are made at circuit and district level if the candidate has any specific support needs (eg paperwork in a specific colour for candidates with dyslexia, or meetings to be held in accessible venues). It is the candidate's responsibility to inform the Church of any specific support needs for each element of the selection process.

5. DISTRICT CANDIDATES' COMMITTEE (DCC)

You are responsible for the administration of this committee.

- 5.1. SO sets out the requirements for the size (10-13 members plus the Chair of District and Secretary of the committee) and composition of the committee. While there is no quorum for this committee, it is important that all candidates receive a similar assessment by their DCC. Therefore please ensure that the committee is no smaller than 12 people.
- 5.2. Please inform (candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk) of the date(s) of your district's committee as soon as practicable. Please arrange to hold your committee between 9 January 2021 and 1 February 2021. Although the pressures of time at this time of year can be significant, it is best if you can avoid holding the DCC on 9 January in order to give the candidate and committee sufficient time to reflect on the report from the portfolio assessor. These deadlines are important to ensure that the candidate and the DCC have seen the portfolio assessment report before the DCC meets, and also to ensure that the paperwork from the DCC can be produced in time for the next stages.
- 5.3. Prior to the District Candidates' Committee, the candidates' office will forward to you, and the candidate's Superintendent, information (in electronic format) about every candidate for ordained ministry from your district.
- 5.4. Before the committee meets, the candidate will contact you to let you know what medium they would like to use for their D.5 Creative Presentation – it is your responsibility (within reason) to ensure that any necessary arrangements are made.
- 5.5. You will receive a hard copy of the C.2 Candidate's Portfolio, but all other information will only be available electronically. There will be:
- **C.1 Candidates' Application Form** and **C.1.1 Superintendent's Assessment of Availability for Stationing Form**
 - **C.2 Candidate's Portfolio** (without the appendices)
 - **C.3 Report on Leading Worship** reports x 2 (Note: the form is the same for diaconal and Presbyteral candidates).
 - **C.4 Circuit Leadership Team** report

- **C.4.1 Circuit Meeting Vote** report form
 - **C.5 Critical friend's reference** from someone who is a 'critical friend' and a **C.5.1 Employer's reference** from the candidate's employer/training institution/voluntary organisation.
- 5.6. You are responsible for ensuring that the District Candidates' Committee has the necessary paperwork regarding each candidate. The district and connexional committees are both asked to look for any discrepancies in the candidate's paperwork (e.g. gaps between periods of employment or addresses).
- 5.7. The hard copy of the portfolio will need to be handed to a previously identified member of the District Candidates' Committee who can read it fully and be prepared to ask questions about it. By the time of the committee the portfolio marker's comments and assessment will be available to the candidate and the committee. It is important to bear in mind that a grade 3 or 4 for the portfolio (unsatisfactory) is only one element, significant though it be, and not the whole of the story about a candidate. Please note though that a candidate with a grade 3 or 4 for their portfolio, can only continue with their candidacy if the DCC have made a statement (on form D.4) that they should not be precluded from continuing in their candidature on the sole ground that the portfolio was not of the required standard.
- 5.8. At the DCC, the pattern is that the candidate is interviewed by three small groups and the full committee. Forms D.1, D.2 and D.3 are for the small groups and D.4 is for the full committee. All four of these are available on the Methodist Church website; you may find it helpful to make them available to committee members beforehand for training and preparation. The first part of the full committee will be the creative presentation (see D.5), the topic for which will be on the website on 2 October 2020. D.6 Committee Members' Briefing Notes contains suggested questions for you to make available to committee members. Some districts choose to have the creative presentation to the full committee before the small groups so that committee members have time to consider issues arising from the creative presentation before seeing the candidate later in the full committee interview.
- 5.9. Voting at DCC can have an impact later in the process. All members of the DCC should be prepared to vote on each candidate. If they have a conflict of interest with a particular candidate (see form G.17), they should not be present for that candidate's interviews and therefore they are not counted in the total of those eligible to vote on that particular candidate. If they are a member of a candidate's circuit meeting and do not wish to vote twice, they are asked not to vote at the circuit meeting, so that they can vote at the DCC. There should be no cause to abstain at the DCC. Members need to be aware that abstentions are counted in when final percentages are calculated. Districts can choose whether to vote by ballot or a show of hands. There are good reasons to support each method.
- 5.10. It is very difficult for a District Candidates' Committee to see more than four candidates in a day, especially if sufficient time is to be available to give candidates proper feedback.

5.11. The District Chair informs the candidate of the outcome of the DCC on the day, in company with those who are present to support the candidate, and the Chair offers guidance and support.

5.12. According to Standing Order 712(6) the following persons have the right to witness the deliberations of the District Candidates' Committee and to speak when the candidate is under consideration, but not to vote:

- the Superintendent of the circuit sending forward a candidate or the minister who has pastoral charge of the candidate; and
- a person who has been significantly involved in the candidate's process of vocational discernment.

The participation of these individuals can sometimes be very helpful in communicating to the candidate the reasoning behind the DCC's recommendation. They cannot accompany the candidate if they are a close relative of the candidate.

5.13. It is very important that all forms and particularly the D.4 DCC Report of Full Committee forms are filled in as fully as possible, particularly so that the candidate and the Connexional Candidates' Selection Committee can understand how and why the district has come to hold the view it subsequently records on the form. The candidate can also add their comments. Please take some time with your District Chair to think about the most helpful way that these forms can be completed.

5.14. Please ensure that the forms are typed up because, even the clearest handwriting can be difficult to read when copies are made. Please send all forms in word format to the candidates' office as soon as possible after your DCC has met. The forms must be emailed to candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk, with signed hard copies to arrive no later than 12 noon 10 February 2021.

5.15. If there are issues that you think the Candidates' Office and the Connexional Candidates' Selection Committee need to be aware of, please state these in the space provided on the D.4 form.

5.16. A candidate not recommended to continue by the district may nevertheless exercise the right to do so, as long as they either have been graded 1 or 2 for their portfolio or the DCC has stated that they should not be precluded on the grounds of their portfolio alone.

6. THE SELECTION CRITERIA

6.1. The selection criteria for candidates for ordained ministry are available on the website G.4 Selection Criteria for Ordained Ministry. It is vital that committee members are familiar with these. The District forms are shaped around them. However, the following are some areas highlighted in recent years by the connexional committee. You may find it helpful to raise these with committee

members, and/or to ensure that the candidate has sufficient opportunities for reflection in these areas prior to the district committee:

- 6.1.1. An ability to articulate clearly their sense of call to a particular order of ministry and to reflect on the implications of ordained, itinerant ministry;
- 6.1.2. Knowledge of Methodism and its charisms, doctrinal standards and present practice. The committee is looking for knowledge, understanding, evaluation, application and a sense of ownership, as well as an awareness of ecumenical and inter-faith relationships;
- 6.1.3. Knowledge of the distinctiveness of the two orders of ordained ministry
- 6.1.4. An understanding of lay ministry meaning the ministry of people in the wider world (work, society etc), not just roles in the life of the church;
- 6.1.5. An integrated understanding of Safeguarding;
- 6.1.6. Skills in theological reflection.

7. AFTER THE DISTRICT CANDIDATES' COMMITTEE

- 7.1. If a candidate withdraws from the process after the District Committee, the District are asked to ensure they are given pastoral support and helped to reflect on the implications of their decision.
- 7.2. The Connexional Committee "shall at all times give careful attention to the judgments of the District Candidates Committee, especially in those cases where their own assessment differs" (SO 713(5)).
- 7.3. Outcome letters will be sent to candidates by post and by e-mail following the Connexional Committee.
- 7.4. You will receive a copy of the outcome letter sent to the candidate. Liaise with his or her Superintendent to ensure the necessary opportunities for support and reflection, especially if the candidate is not recommended (the Connexion provides an opportunity for candidates who are not recommended to attend a retreat). However, you are asked to exercise due discretion and maintain confidentiality, as the candidate's story is theirs to tell.
- 7.5. Sometimes, the Connexional Committee will encourage a candidate to re-apply at a later date (though normally not in the next Connexional year). It is helpful for the circuit and district to support the candidate but also to provide them with space to reflect, and not to encourage them immediately towards another office.

8. DATES

G.12 Deadlines and G.6 Steps in candidating set out all the key dates and deadlines for the candidating year.

If you have any other queries or need any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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