

Mission Partner Application Processes Framework and Person Criteria

June 2020

A Mission Partner is someone prepared to serve God in another country, under the authority of the Partner Church or Partner Organisation which they serve. The Mission Partner will be a Minister of the Methodist Church Britain or Methodist Church Ireland, or a lay person who will then be employed by the Methodist Church Britain as a Mission Partner.

At the heart of the Mission Partner role is the commitment to be a living expression of our solidarity with our Partner, as God, in Christ, showed solidarity in Jesus's journey to live with us (Philippians 2:3-8). A Mission Partner will share in God's global mission, born out of love (John 3:16), and is sent as Christ was sent (John 20:21). They will be flexible and able to cope with the unexpected.

The Mission Partner will bring a skill that a Partner Church or Organisation can use, working respectfully alongside others in God's mission (1 Corinthians 3:5-6) under the leadership of our Partner.

They will gain and share a new perspective of God's work in another part of the world, and will advocate for God's global mission in the Methodist Church of Britain or Ireland.

The Mission Partner will have a sense of call to overseas service through the Methodist Church which they can articulate.

God's call is to participate in God's global mission (Matthew 28:16-20); for some, this will mean a call to a commitment to serve in another country and culture. God's call can come as a response to a general (Isaiah 6:1-8) or a specific (Acts 16:9) need; but, as members of the Body of Christ, calling must be tested by the collective gathering of Christ's people seeking discernment (Acts 1:15-26 & 13:1-3).

As awareness of a specific need may be the means by which a call is received, the Methodist Church in Britain will advertise any roles and places where Partners have asked for Mission Partners, as well as publicising the general invitation to consider God's calling to overseas service. Given this; given that God might use an awareness of one situation to lead someone to ultimately serve in another situation; given that the call is to the role of Mission Partner; and given that a couple may include an ordained and lay candidate for Mission Partner Service, the following is an integrated process that will allow collective discernment for all candidates for Mission Partner service.

It is a process that will seek assurance that the candidate has the gifts and graces to be a Mission Partner. Following the discernment process, a successful candidate will need to successfully complete training as a Mission Partner. An appropriate placement will be sought for them; this may be any specific post that had led to their candidature. The

Director of Global Relationships will not begin the process of finding a placement if advice from the health consultants (e.g. medical specialists and psychologists) states that it would be detrimental to the well-being of anyone travelling to relocate overseas at that time.

Couples

Given that one member of a couple may not have the skills needed by our Partners at a particular time, or may not have a calling to be a Mission Partner, the role of 'Accompanying Volunteer' is available. The criteria necessary to be an Accompanying Volunteer are set out below and are to be used in the same discernment process; the Accompanying Volunteer will need to successfully complete training.

Alternatively, a person may apply to be a Mission Partner, and the other member of the couple not offer as Mission Partner or Accompanying Volunteer; only the Mission Partner would be put through the selection process and training in this instance. However, this is a discernment process for service with partner churches who are autonomous and who may have different cultural expectations, so the Director of Global Relationships will advise as early in the process as practicable about the likelihood of a suitable placement being found where one member of a couple wishes to be neither an Mission Partner nor Accompanying Volunteer. The Mission Partner will be asked in writing if their partner is supportive of their candidature and the Director of Global Relationships will follow up with the Mission Partner if there are any concerns arising out of their written reply and report on this to the Panel.

Families with Children

If you have children, then the entire family will be invited to attend a separate day, usually after successful completion of the process, in which all the family will undergo a physical health check and meet the Clinical Psychologist who specialises in working with children and families and both parents interviewed about the children. A summary report of the Psychologists recommendations within GDPR guidelines - will then be sent to Human Resources (HR) and to the Panel Clinical Psychologist. Because of our duty of care, the Clinical Psychologist who specialises in working with children and families will inform the family and the Director of Global Relationships of any concerns that should be explored before a placement is found and of any special needs that have to be considered when seeking a placement. The Director of Global Relationships will not begin the process of finding a placement if advice from the health consultants (e.g. medical specialists and psychologists) states that it would be detrimental to the well-being of anyone travelling to relocate overseas at that time.

There are four main stages to the discernment process for Mission Partners:

1. Enquiries and formal Application.
2. First Formal Interview (FFI).
3. Overseas Service Panel.
4. Training and Discerning Mission Partner appointments.

Other notes: Roles and Criteria

Stage 1 - Enquiries for Mission Partner work and formal application process

- 1.1 Information on serving as a mission partner is available on the Global Relationships area of the Methodist Church Website.
- 1.2 Informal enquiries about mission partner service can be made to the Global Relationships team at: gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk
- 1.3 If after thought, prayer and discussion with persons such as minister, family and friends you decide to enter in to the discernment process, the application forms are available from the website and these should be returned to HR at the email address on the form.
- 1.4 If the applicant proceeds to the next stage you will receive the following forms to complete prior to the First Formal Interview: Christian Discipleship form and Statements of Support/references form. These form should be completed and returned so that there is at least two months in which to gather the references/statements of support and prepare all of the documents for the FFI stage. **Unless HR receives the statements of support and references, the candidate will not proceed to panel.**
- 1.5 Within one month of receiving the reference forms and Christian discipleship forms HR will have notified the candidate of a date for a First Formal Interview.
- 1.6 For persons applying from Methodist Church Ireland (MCI) – the World Mission Partnership in Ireland will conduct a preliminary interview. MCI will forward all relevant paperwork to HR and make a recommendation to Global Relationships if they should continue. This replaces the process above. The MCI are responsible for informing HR of a recommended candidate. The recommended candidate from MCI will proceed to the FFI stage. Upon being notified by MCI of a recommended candidate from MCI, HR will contact the candidate as quickly as possible, and send the MCI applicant the Application form, Christian Discipleship form and Statement of Support and referee forms within ten working days. HR will acknowledge receipt of these forms within five working days of their receipt and, within a month, will have notified the candidates of a date for a FFI.

Stage 2 - First Formal Interview (FFI)

Purpose: To elicit evidence of reflection of reality of going overseas for a minimum of 3 years and the implications for personal relationships; its effects on parents and children, where applicable; ability to cope; self-awareness of personal needs (to relax, de-stress)

and cross cultural awareness. At this stage candidates should be able to show evidence of some experience and thought process in these areas, and that they demonstrably meet or have the potential to meet all of the skills and qualities on the Mission Partner Person Profile related to these areas.

- 2.1 The first formal interview (FFI) date is agreed with the Clinical Psychologist and the FFI interviewers, in consultation with the candidate(s). This needs to be preferably 3 months and at least 1 month, in advance of the Overseas Service Panel, which are normally held in September and April. HR formally notify the candidate (s) of the FFI date. Preferably there is at least two months from the sending of the invitation and the date of the FFI.
- 2.2 Travel costs are not paid to the applicant at the FFI, with the exception of candidates from MCI, who will be reimbursed by MCI for travel costs to the FFI.
- 2.3 The First Formal Interview consists of a meeting with the Clinical Psychologist and the FFI panel which is usually 3 or 4 people.
- 2.4 The psychologist will meet with the candidate(s) and give their recommendation to the FFI panel after the panel interview.
- 2.4.1** At FFI the Clinical Psychologist will interview the candidates separately and, in the case of a couple, together. A member of a couple who does not wish to be either a Mission Partner or an Accompanying Volunteer will be invited to meet the Psychologist, with the candidate, should they both wish, to explore any issues that it might be helpful for them to consider as they consider either both living overseas or one living overseas without the other. The Psychologist may recommend a specialised additional psychological test to be held before the Overseas Service Panel (OSP) for any candidate recommended to the OSP, but where there may be particular additional questions that need exploring.
- 2.5 Panel Interview Process:*
 - 2.5.1** Couples should be seen both separately and together during the First Formal Interviews. This should be the case, even if only one person is offering to be a Mission Partner and the other an Accompanying Volunteer, since they will also be undergoing the same stresses of moving and living in another country and culture. Persons who are not offering to be either Mission Partner or Accompanying Volunteer will not be seen by the panel.
 - 2.5.2** Each interview should ideally last for approximately one hour.
 - 2.5.3 The Director of Global Relationships or his/her deputy should meet at the end of the day with the FFI interviewers including the psychologist, for final decision. They would therefore review statements of support before the meeting. The decision would be made by the FFI panel with the benefit of the opinion of the psychologist's report.
 - 2.5.4 Notification of the outcome should be received by candidates within two working days. Candidates should be told at the interview that within two working days they

will either receive notification of outcome of the FFI or be given the reason for delay. If agreed the candidates will move forward to the Overseas Service Panel as Mission Partner candidates.

Stage 3 - Overseas Service Panel (OSP)

- 3.1 The invitation to the OSP should be sent out by HR if possible 3 months in advance to applicants and those taking part as part of the panel and support. An updated reading list, provided by GR, will be sent to candidates by HR at this stage.
- 3.2 There should be two Overseas Service Panels per year, if needed. It is very important in the case of ministers that the timeline of the Methodist Church Britain stationing process is taken in to account. Overseas Service panels are normally held in September and April.
- 3.3 Details of the OSP (including directions, dietary requirement requests, etc.) should be communicated to the applicant and all those involved at least 2 weeks before it takes place by the assigned administrator.
 - Travel costs will be paid for all participants including those being interviewed for the OSP. This will be administered by the Mission Team administrator gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk
 - Collectively, the Panel needs to be in a position to assess both the professional and spiritual aspects of the application. Diversity among panel members needs to be ensured as much as possible in relation to gender, ethnicity and cultural mix. Persons will be drawn from the same list as for the FFI, but (with the exception of the Director/Deputy of Global Relationships and Psychologist), will not be persons who were present at the FFI. A Chaplain should be present as well as an OSP facilitator, who will be an assigned administrator. The Director/Deputy of Global Relationships and at least one Partnership Coordinator needs to attend; in all around 5 panel members will be needed, though the exact number may depend on the number of candidates. If an ordained minister is a candidate, then one panel member must be a Chair of District.
- 3.4 Steps will be taken in accordance with applicable policies with the aim of ensuring that there will be no discrimination against candidates on any basis. Persons in same-sex marriages or persons cohabiting may offer for overseas service and expect to be treated without prejudice at interviews; however, this is a discernment process for service with partner churches who are autonomous and the DGR will advise as early in the process as practicable about the likelihood of a suitable placement being found.
- 3.6 The OSP interview process to contain these elements:

- A more in-depth psychological review and additional psychometric assessments as indicated from the FFI
- A spirituality and faith focussed interview
- A professional work place interview
- Serving with a In another country with a Partner of the Methodist Church in Britain: interview
- A workshop/scenario – perhaps in conjunction with other candidates

3.7 The two days should also include free time for quiet reflection/walks and more formal devotional time.

3.5 On completion of the interview sessions, the applicants should leave and the panel agree on their recommendation and inform the candidate within 2 working days:

3.6 All candidates will be asked to provide the name of a person who will offer them support upon receiving notification of the decision. This person is to be notified by HR when the candidate has received the notification, but not told what the decision is. If the application is declined they should be invited to talk that through with their chosen supportive person as this may be a very difficult process. All documentation should be retained by HR, along with the reasons for the decision made.

3.7 There is no right to appeal. Candidates may reapply.

3.8 If the application is accepted to go on to training, then the successful candidate(s) will be informed that a placement overseas is dependent upon a successful report on their training being received and (as applicable) confirmation of ability to work in UK, professional certification, and DBS. Regarding couples, this must be received for both persons, regardless of whether they are two Mission Partners or a Mission Partner and Accompanying Volunteer. It is also essential that all Mission Partners are declared medically fit to take up post and all accompanying family members are declared medically fit to relocate overseas for the duration of the placement.

Stage 4 – Training and Discerning Mission Partner Appointments

- 4 At this stage, the DGR initiates the process of discernment with the Global Relationships team about possible locations of service. Every effort will be made to find placements for successful candidates. Should only one suitable full-time and one suitable part-time professional placement be found where a couple have both successfully offered to work as full-time Mission Partners, each member of the couple would be offered employment as a full-time Mission Partner, bearing in mind the advocacy and partnership-building nature of the Mission Partner role that each will bear. However, if couples have refused to take up placements where a professional

role for each partner was offered, or all attempts to find two appointments have been exhausted, the Director of Global Relationships has the right to offer one Mission Partner and one Accompanying Volunteer role. Accompanying Volunteers will enjoy all the same benefits as accompanying minors. A member of a couple who does not wish to be either a Mission Partner or an Accompanying Volunteer will receive no benefits, except that the World Mission Fund would pay for a flight home for them in an emergency should this be beyond the financial capability of the couple at that time. Moreover, should the member of the couple who is not a Mission Partner or Accompanying Volunteer wish to join the Mission Partner in the accommodation provided for training, they would not receive any financial support.

- 4.1 Except in exceptional circumstances, Ministers will not be placed with a Partner Church in which they candidated.
- 4.2 The Director of Global Relationships (GR) initiates the process with the GR team to put in place the training needed and the timescales/dates.
- 4.3 The commencement of training includes a commencement of financial and HR aspects of employment as a mission partner in training. All details should be communicated to the applicant by HR.
- 4.4 The Mission Partner or Accompanying Volunteer in training is formally accepted on successful completion of the training and a report from the training institution that supports their acceptance as a Mission Partner or Accompanying Volunteer, provided all pre-employment checks are successfully completed.
- 4.5 On completion of the training the Mission Partner should travel to their placement as soon as possible subject to a satisfactory Risk Assessment appropriate to the placement location, and local work permits appropriate to the work to be undertaken and the length of the placement, and the placement commences. However, additional language training between Mission Partner training and commencement of the placement may be necessary.

Other notes:

Role and Personal Criteria

- 5.1 Candidates must be over 18 and be able to provide documentary evidence of a specialist skill and relevant experience in order to be considered as Mission Partners.
- 5.2 Candidates must have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland.
- 5.3 The Application Form will include a statement that it is generally expected that a Mission Partner serving the Methodist Church be a member of the Methodist Church, and the following questions:
Are you a member of the Methodist Church?

If not, are you prepared to become a member of the Methodist Church before taking up a placement overseas?

If not, why?

However, cognisance of the need for flexibility will be taken where couples include one party who is not a Methodist; for applications in response to an especial appeal by a Partner for someone with specialised skills; and for applications to serve in an ecumenical appointment.

- 5.4 The form will also require that the candidate can understand and embrace the priorities of the Methodist Church in Britain and/or Ireland and 'Our Calling' of the Methodist Church in Britain.
- 5.5 Candidates offering in response to a specific appeal to fulfil a particular role will be encouraged to reflect on whether God might be calling them elsewhere, but applications limited to one particular position will be considered. In the unlikely event of multiple successful applicants for one post that has been advertised as an example of current need, the Partner Church will be invited to interview all successful applicants and all costs will be covered by the World Mission Fund (WMF). Any unsuccessful candidate for a specific post who had been accepted as a Mission Partner will be offered any suitable alternative that may be available at that time.
- 5.6 Successful candidates will be expected to serve a minimum of one 'tour'. A 'tour' is three years of service. However, after three years of service, Mission Partners may offer to serve less time than a whole tour.

Criteria for Mission Partner Selection

1. You will have and be able to articulate a sense of God's call on your life. You will be able to share with us mature reflection about your understanding of calling, drawing on your own experiences, theology, Scripture and church tradition.
2. You will have a recognisable call to overseas service. You will be able to share with us why you believe this calling is specifically to overseas service through The Methodist Church. This may mean being able to identify why you believe your calling is not to other forms of service and ministry.
3. You will have the gifts and graces necessary for overseas service through the Methodist Church. This is something you will be able to evidence through your own experiences of challenge and also through your knowledge of ministry in contexts different to yours own.
4. You will have an appreciation of the opportunities and challenges of working in a different context
5. You will be able to work respectfully in a different culture and with accountability to a Partner Church or Organisation, which may have very different power structures from your previous experience.
6. You will be able to demonstrate a mature and growing spiritual life, confident in God's love and able to articulate your faith appropriately. You will be a person of

prayer, engaging in corporate worship, reflecting well on the Scriptures, regularly receiving the Eucharist and showing God's love through acts of service.

7. Overseas service will be demanding emotionally, spiritually, psychologically and physically. You will be self-aware and confident that you are held in God's love. You will be emotionally mature and a person of integrity and honesty. You will show stamina, robustness, good-humoured flexibility and resilience, whilst maintaining godly humility. You will be able to draw on inner resources and open to support from others.
8. You will relate well and respectfully with others. You will be mindful and respectful of cultural difference and of diversity. You will be respectful of the Methodist Churches in Britain and Ireland, and of the Partner Church in which you will worship and work, communicating in ways that help develop and maintain respectful and appropriate conversations. You will show Christ's love in your attitudes and relationships and be professional in your work.
9. You will recognise and embrace your role alongside others in God's mission. You will rejoice in and be able to articulate the Good News of God's action in Christ. You will recognise and serve Christ in the marginalised. You will be sensitive to how to express faith appropriately in different contexts.
10. You will be one who serves Christ in others and who works collaboratively and well with others. You will be sensitive to the dynamics of power; being aware of your own power; how power can be empowering or abusive; and you will be able to serve another Partner Church or Organisation respectfully, humbly and appropriately.
11. You will be eager to learn and be committed to life-long development. You will commit to the training provided before your initial placement and bring openness to theological, spiritual, inter-cultural learning and development, as well as demonstrating a commitment to ongoing learning and development in your professional field.
12. You will be able to communicate well within different contexts and able to articulate the priorities of the Methodist Church in Britain and/or Ireland and the Partner Church and Organisation. You will commit to sharing stories and news from your new context in ways that are appropriate and respectful. Drawing in your experience as a Mission Partner, you will commit to providing reports at least quarterly that can be used by the Methodist Church in Britain and/or Ireland for advocacy and prayer, and you will commit to speaking at acts of worship and conferences in Britain and/or Ireland when on furlough.
13. You will embrace and articulate Our Calling.
14. You will be a member of the Methodist Church or will become a member before entry into training for an overseas placement, in order to articulate and represent the above criteria as it relates to the Methodist Church in God's mission.¹

¹ However, cognisance of the need for flexibility will be taken where couples include one party who is not a Methodist; for applications in response to an especial appeal by a Partner for someone with specialised skills; and for applications to serve in an ecumenical appointment.

Criteria for an Accompanying Volunteer:

1. You will have the gifts and graces necessary for overseas service through the Methodist Church, which you will be able to demonstrate in a coherent way.
2. You will have an appreciation of the opportunities and challenges of working in a different context
3. You will be able to live respectfully in a different culture which may have very different power structures from your previous experience.
4. You will be able to demonstrate a mature and growing spiritual life, confident in God's love. You will be a person of prayer who engages in corporate worship and who shows God's love through acts of service.
5. Overseas service will be demanding emotionally, spiritually, psychologically and physically. You will be self-aware and confident that you are held in God's love. You will be emotionally mature and a person of integrity and honesty. You will show stamina, robustness, good-humoured flexibility and resilience, whilst maintaining godly humility. You will be able to draw on inner resources and open to support from others.
6. You will relate well and respectfully with others. You will be mindful and respectful of cultural difference and of diversity. You will be respectful of the Methodist Churches in Britain and Ireland, and of the Partner Church in which you will worship and serve, communicating in ways that help develop and maintain respectful and appropriate conversations. You will show Christ's love in your attitudes and relationships.
7. You will recognise Christ in the marginalised. You will be sensitive to how to express faith appropriately in different contexts.
8. You will be one who serves Christ in others and who relates well with others. You will be sensitive to the dynamics of power; being aware of your own power; how power can be empowering or abusive.
9. You will commit to the training provided before your initial placement and bring openness to theological, spiritual, inter-cultural learning and development.