

Local Lay-Pastors

MC/22/42

Date of meeting	2-4 April 2022
Contact name and details	Gary Hopkins, Ministry Development Officer, hopkinsg@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	For discussion and recommendation to Conference
Resolutions	42/1. The Council receives the report. 42/2. The Council approves the general direction and approach adopted in the report. 42/3. The Council recommends to the Conference the Local Lay-Pastor competencies as set out in Appendix 1.

Summary of content

Subject of aims	A progress report on the development of the Office of a Local Lay-Pastor, particularly responding to the 2021 Conference decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to bring competencies for the role of Local Lay-Pastor to the 2022 Conference to explore issues around employment to establish a training pathway with appropriate training resources.
Main points	This report covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an outline of some of the background that has shaped the development of this role description of the process used to develop competencies and the final draft description of the development of a training pathway connexional learning of how the role has been successfully implemented in the local context information about the developments of an approach to recruitment and the challenges in employment the importance of continuing development and that Circuits must make time and budget financial resources to support this.
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	This report relates directly to the 2021 Conference decisions made in response to the <i>Changing Patterns of Ministry</i> report (2021 Conference report 26)
Consultations	The Ministries Committee The Revd Ashley R Cooper (Cliff College) Mr Tom Milton (Birmingham Methodist Circuit) Mrs Rachel Mitchell (South Devon Methodist Circuit) The Revd David C Newlove (Cumbria District) The Revd Terry M Nowell (Lincolnshire District) Mrs Helle Sewell (Darlington District) Mrs Heather Shipman (Yorkshire North and East District)

Background

- 1 Prior to the Changing Patterns of Ministry report being presented to the 2021 Conference, the Ministries Team undertook some informal research to establish current practices across the Connexion. This was in response to the initial report that was on the 2020 Conference agenda but was not presented due to the pandemic.
- 2 It was ascertained that there were a number of models in place and a variety of expectations in what Local Lay-Pastors do. In the majority of cases, particularly in District models, there was a desire to be rigorous and provide a strong framework for good practice.
- 3 Conversations demonstrated that this is a vocational calling from God enabling people to respond to the needs of the local context. This partnership between flexibility in meeting the local needs but also in ensuring a good standard of practice is key. These conversations were fed back to the working group for the Changing Patterns of Ministry report and helped to shape some of the revisions for the 2021 Conference.
- 4 Many of those who had been key players in developing pastor roles rejoiced at the decision of Conference, recognising it as an affirmation of God's calling in people's lives to serve in their local context. However, those involved recognised that as an office was established, there needed to be a balance between connexional expectations and local practice.
- 5 The work we have done in moving the decision of the Conference into practice has held this desire at heart. There was agreement that this must be an office that enables people to flourish in their calling; it must equip them with skills and knowledge that arise from their God-given gifts and maintain a standard that is accountable.

Work following the Conference's Decision

The Competencies

- 6 The first major piece of work was developing a set of competencies for the role. A working group was established to bring together understandings of the role, to begin to build a network of people who are at the forefront of developing this role and to ensure the competencies meet the needs of the different models and contexts. Meetings were held and several drafts produced, with time in between for representatives to consult with their local contexts and Districts.
- 7 The working group decided that the competencies could be grouped into different stages of a Local-Lay Pastors development. Early competencies need to be met during recruitment processes to ensure fitness to begin the role. Local Lay-Pastors then undertake a period of learning and development, accessing teaching and reflecting on the role to meet a set of core competencies. Further development competencies were seen as areas where Local Lay-Pastors might develop specialisms or deeper knowledge – recognising that such roles are lifelong learning roles.
- 8 In presenting the competencies to the Ministries Committee, there was some conversation about whether the early competencies were too high an expectation for people beginning the role. The working group felt it is necessary to set an aspirational standard for beginning the role, but there is a balance to be made with ensuring people called by God can enter into the role and develop. The competencies are included as Appendix 1.
- 9 One of the challenges is, where Local Lay-Pastors are employed, they are expected to begin the role immediately and 'train on the job'. In a role where pastoral care and leadership is being offered, there is a need to have a certain level of competency to match responsibility.
- 10 Where a Local Lay-Pastor is appointed as a volunteer, there is a level of flexibility to allow for a longer time of development, balancing initial responsibilities with the current level of competency. However, this approach could also be offered to those who are employed, ensuring responsibilities match competency and training, which would then be increased as the Local Lay-Pastor develops.

- 11 It would be necessary for Circuits to work out the level of initial competency required and how that would match with preliminary responsibilities. Therefore, the early competencies are a focus for initial development during the probation period and a Circuit would need to decide which of the competencies it uses to shape the person specification for recruitment.

Training

- 12 There have been very fruitful conversations with Cliff College in offering a training route for Local Lay-Pastors. Cliff College is currently developing a Formation in Mission and Ministry modular course. A number of accredited modules can either be taken as standalone modules or used towards a qualification.
- 13 In collaboration, we have worked out a number of modules that upon successful completion demonstrate 'meeting' the core competencies and would lead to accreditation as a Local Lay-Pastor. The six modules, completed one each term over a two-year period, are Christian Spirituality; Leadership, Team and Self; Ministry in the Methodist Tradition; Theological Reflection and Reflective Practice; Pastoral Practice; and Christian Theology. There are several other modules which could be taken alongside or as part of ongoing development as a Local Lay-Pastor, leading to deeper knowledge and specialisms.

Context

- 14 Another challenge in developing this role is the need for it to reflect other forms of ministry where people do not remain in roles for long periods. This is especially apparent when balancing the framework for the office with employment legislation. If employed roles are offered fixed-term there need to be justifiable reasons why this is the case, and morally, we must ensure appropriate levels of job security are given to those in employment.
- 15 There has been some wisdom gleaned from conversations in what makes the role effective. The most effective practice is where the appointment of Local Lay-Pastors is related to the ministry of the whole Circuit and not seen as a replacement for previously held ministry roles. This provides an opportune moment for a review of the ministry model used in a Circuit, ensuring ministry matches the needs of the Circuit and its mission in the world, while appropriately enabling the gifts of those responding to God's call in the Circuit.
- 16 Local Lay-Pastors should not be seen as a replacement for a presbyter or deacon, but a form of complementary ministry in enabling mission for the sake of the world. This way of reflecting and reviewing offers a process for recruiting someone to a Local Lay-Pastor role for a particular period.
- 17 Therefore, before someone is appointed, it would be necessary for a Circuit to review their current mission and ministry and develop a model for going forward, which may include the appointment of Local Lay-Pastors. This model would be implemented for a particular period, and could be related to stationing movements.
- 18 Another review would be necessary at the end of this time, recognising that the context we work in is changing rapidly and our ministry models must adapt to the needs of the world and where God is calling us. The review at the end might lead to a different model, or an extension of the current one and contracts extended.

Recruitment

- 19 In supporting Circuits making the appointment of Local Lay-Pastors, a process with guidance is being developed. The review mentioned above would be the first step and where there is need for Local Lay-Pastors the following would happen.
- 20 In recruiting Local Lay-Pastors, a Circuit would need to decide the particular duties of their Local Lay-Pastors based on their decided ministry model. This would form the job description, which would be created from a template. In relation to this they would need to decide the initial responsibilities and level of competency required to begin the role, using the early competencies as a basis. This will form the person specification, created using a template. Using these documents, a

Circuit will then design their interview and selection process based on guidance provided.

- 21** Next, a contract would be agreed, following a model contract, and the learning and development process begun. Training would commence through Cliff College. The Circuit would then submit a form to the Ministries Team to indicate that someone had started the Local Lay-Pastor accreditation process; this would include identification of which competencies have been evidenced during the selection process.
- 22** The Circuit would then need to design an appropriate induction, appointing a suitable line-manager and ensuring the individual is aware of local policies and key Methodist policies as well as attending Safeguarding and other required training. It will also be necessary to use the competencies as a framework to identify where the Local Lay-Pastor may need particular support.
- 23** A Local Lay-Pastor will commence a six-month probation period. During this period they should have evidenced meeting all of the early competencies and made good progress towards the core competencies. This will be assessed through successful completion of two Cliff College modules and through regular reflective line-management meetings. A form will shape reflective line-management conversations to ensure that these focus on competencies, recognising those that are being met, and those which may need extra support.
- 24** After at least six months, upon completion of two modules, demonstration of meeting all the early competencies and a good level of progress towards meeting the core competencies, a Circuit would decide that a Local Lay-Pastor has successfully completed their probation period. The Circuit submits a second form to the Ministries Team, indicating completion of the probation period and which competencies have been demonstrated as met.
- 25** Following this, the Local Lay-Pastor continues learning and developing by completing the remaining required Cliff College modules and focusing on meeting all of the core competencies through reflective line-management.
- 26** Upon successful completion of the six Cliff College modules, the Circuit will complete a form indicating that the Local Lay-Pastor has demonstrated the core competencies as met. They will use reflective line-management conversations, evidenced through meeting records, to support their decision. This form will be sent to the Ministries Team who will then provide a certificate of accreditation as a Local Lay-Pastor for a set period.

Continuing Development

- 27** It is important that the induction is not seen as the end of learning and development in this role. All ministry is an ongoing process of lifelong learning. Therefore, Local Lay-Pastors will be required to engage in continuing professional development. This might be through taking additional modules, but can also include other appropriate learning activities.
- 28** At the end of their initial accreditation period, a Local Lay-Pastor will need to demonstrate that they have continued to meet the competencies and engaged in further development activities. A Circuit will submit a form supporting this re-accreditation to the Ministries Team and a further time-limited certificate of accreditation will be given.
- 29** Key to the success of the development of a Local Lay-Pastor is the recognition that there is need for a Local Lay-Pastor to engage in learning and development. A Circuit must make consideration of the time and financial support required for this from the beginning. These should be seen as integral to the role and so when a Circuit is recruiting a Local Lay-Pastor, the hours expected for the role should include learning and development time, particularly time needed to complete the modules at Cliff College. Costs should also be considered and included as on-costs in working out the necessary budget for the role.
- 30** The office of Local Lay-Pastor is an exciting development in the Methodist Church, particularly in keeping true to its roots of enabling lay people to flourish. We hope that through this work of developing the office, the appropriate balance is kept between ensuring a rigorous framework that upholds standards and strong accountability, but also releases, equips and enables people to respond to God's call to serve the Church for the sake of the world.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

42/1. The Council receives the report.

42/2. The Council approves the general direction of travel adopted in the report.

42/3. The Council recommends to the Conference the Local Lay-Pastor competencies as set out in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Local Lay-Pastor Competencies

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
1. Vocation (Call and Commitment)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to articulate a sense of God's call to pastoral ministry in the local context. 2. The ability to articulate experiences where they have demonstrated pastoral ministry. 3. The recognition from others that they have the gifts for pastoral ministry. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation by others in the ministry context that they have the gifts for this ministry. 2. Demonstrates a clear commitment to the outworking of their calling in the role of a Local Lay-Pastor. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with others to further develop a sense of vocational calling
2. Vocation (ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be a member of good standing in the Methodist Church. 2. A worshipping presence in the Christian community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An understanding of ministry lay and ordained within the Methodist Church in Britain and their place within this ministry. 2. The ability to articulate a basic working understanding of local circuit and district structures and what it means to be part of a connexional church. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A thorough understanding of the structures of the Methodist Church in Britain and how connexional networks support and enable local ministry.
3. Relationship with God	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A trusting relationship with God that is marked by humility, reverence, awe and wonder. 2. A prayerful disciple 3. A good knowledge of the Bible and the ability to relate this to daily living. 4. Committed to walking daily with God, accepting that at times this may be challenging and that on occasions there may be doubt 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A secure foundation in faith, but an openness to transformation as they develop new understandings of ministry and their calling. 2. A good understanding of the basics of the Christian faith from a Methodist perspective. 3. A prayerful leader. 4. An openness to listening to God's Spirit along with the whole community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A good understanding of the Christian faith from a range of traditions and Methodism's place within the wider Church. 2. Able to articulate personal growth in faith through theological reflection in their ministry context.
4. Personality and Character	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Honesty and integrity in living as a disciple of Christ with appropriate self-confidence and humility. 2. A reflective practitioner who is aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and their potential for self-development. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good self-awareness and the ability to use strategies for resilience and wellbeing and to exercise appropriate care of self, through developing sustainable patterns of life and work, and through effective support networks, modelling this for others. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to use vulnerability appropriately to enable others to see God's presence in all aspects of human life.

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Compliance with the Methodist Church's Safeguarding requirements, including DBS checks demonstrating that there is nothing that prevents them from being a Local Lay-Pastor. 4. The ability to identify and maintain appropriate boundaries in professional and personal relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The ability to operate under supervision and accept guidance from others, including being managed and led. 	
5. Being in Relationship with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A love for and a call to serve and care for the wider local community and those who are part of the church community. 2. Recognition of and the ability to articulate the fundamental equality of all people before God and the ability to see God in others. 3. The capacity to develop and maintain open and healthy personal, professional and pastoral relationships. 4. The ability to work with diversity inside and outside the church, having respect for the different gifts of all people irrespective of gender, sexuality, age, social and ethnic background and theological understanding, whether they are lay or ordained, people of faith or people of no faith. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to relate to a variety of people and to empathise and challenge appropriately in a range of situations and contexts. 2. An understanding of how power affects relationships and how to use it appropriately. 3. An understanding of the communities in which they are serving. 4. An awareness of what it means to live as a public representative of the Methodist Church and Christian faith. 5. An understanding and the acceptance of the discipline of the Methodist Church and respect for the diversity of views within Methodism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to appropriately challenge injustice and support marginalised communities. 2. The ability to engage with conflict appropriately.
6. The Church's ministry in God's World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An understanding of <i>Our Calling</i> and how it relates to ministry in their local context. 2. The ability to see, and to draw the attention of others to, God at work in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A good understanding of Ministry in the Methodist Church (particularly reports and statements by the Methodist Church). 2. Fidelity to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith and the Methodist doctrinal standards (566 4ii). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to think in imaginative and creative ways when engaging with God's world through the Church's ministry. 2. The ability to recognise and develop new opportunities to engage with the local community as part of the Church's mission

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
7. Leadership and Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to pray with and for others, leading prayers that are appropriate and sensitive to the context. 2. An openness to developing their ability as someone who can lead God's people in aspects of worship. 3. The ability to work collaboratively and as part of a team in ministry, knowing when to work alone and when to seek support. 4. An understanding of what it means to be seen by others as a leader in their local context. 5. A willingness to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to participate in the structures of a church and circuit and to regularly reflect on this experience. 2. A good understanding of the role and status of a Local Lay-Pastor in the life of the circuit. 3. Takes delight in leading with others, working collaboratively, and seeks to empower others for the good of the whole community. 4. The ability to enable the church community to participate in the mission of God in their local context. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to focus attention on a particular or specific community of people, as needed by the circuit. 2. A broad understanding of the nature of leadership and the different ways leadership can be demonstrated, and the knowledge that collaborative leadership empowers the whole community.
8. Learning and Understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enthusiasm for lifelong learning and formation. 2. Growth in their own discipleship and a commitment to personal study of scripture and faith learning. 3. Demonstrates an awareness of contemporary world events and, whilst has some understanding, can articulate a Christian response. 4. A good understanding of pastoral ministry. 5. A commitment to ongoing and appropriate training in Safeguarding. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to understand their learning and development needs through feedback and conversations with others and a commitment to engaging with meaningful development opportunities. 2. A strong understanding of pastoral ministry and knowledge of the approaches used in pastoral support of others and the ability to use these in their own ministry. 3. An understanding of the power dynamics in pastoral relationships. 4. A good understanding of Methodist policies and procedures, including safeguarding, GDPR, equality, diversity and inclusion, and Positive Working Together, and modelling and upholding good practice in relation to these in their work and context. 5. Regularly meet with other Local Lay-Pastors in a community of practice 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An excellent knowledge and understanding of the local context and has the openness to learn to critique cultural norms. 2. An appreciation of Methodist theology and a willingness to learn more about relevant topics. 3. A good understanding of how to enable others to be lifelong learners, and how to model being a learner. 4. An understanding of how to keep up to date with new initiatives and learning opportunities and the ability to discern how and when to use these.

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
		endorsed by the Methodist Church.	
9. Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to express faith naturally and authentically in ways that are appropriate, accessible and sensitive to the situation, using biblical and theological understanding. 2. The ability to engage in one-to-one conversations that are meaningful, appropriate and supportive. 3. An active listener who seeks to understand and communicates effectively within their context, knowing when to speak and when to listen. 4. The ability to use language appropriately and carefully. 5. Approachable and humble enough to be appropriately challenged. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to work with small groups to successfully facilitate conversation and growth. 2. The ability to select and use the most appropriate communication media and style for the context. 3. An ability to engage with the wider community in an accessible and meaningful way. 4. Effective communication skills for mission and evangelism, including being able to speak appropriately about God in a range of settings. 5. The ability to articulate a good understanding of the role and status of a Local Lay-Pastor in the life of the circuit. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to speak effectively in various forms and through various media. 2. Advocating for the communities with whom they are local-lay pastor.