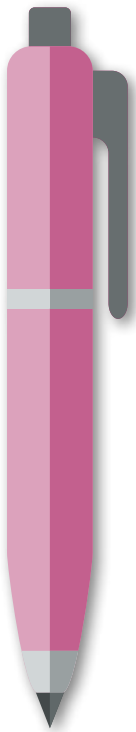




# Ministerial Development Review

A guide for ordained ministers and  
lay contributors involved in review



On Tuesday 21 October 1735 John Wesley and his companions sailed for Georgia. They intended to spend the time on the journey preparing for the ministry that lay ahead of them:

“We now began to be a little regular... At twelve we met to give an account of one another what we had done since our last meeting, and what we designed to do before our next.”

The meeting at noon embodied their mutual accountability; from earliest days Methodists have met with each other to encourage one another and to reflect together as to how what they have been doing and plan to do serves the work of God. Ministerial Development Review (MDR) is part of that tradition, albeit an annual process rather than a daily conversation. In MDR and through supervision, ministers ‘give an account’ of what we have done and what we design to do.

This guide is produced in order to help ministers to give that account and to design what they should do next. It will help all those involved and those to whom the presbyter or deacon ministers to benefit from the process. As the guide notes, “Effective reflection leads to insights and understanding that can then be applied to future ‘practice’.”  
As Mr Wesley knew.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hustler', written in a cursive style.

The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler  
Assistant Secretary of the Conference

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# CHAPTER ONE – AN OUTLINE OF MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

## About this guide

This guide is designed for ordained ministers who will be involved in Ministerial Development Review (MDR) as well as for those acting as lay contributors. It may also be helpful to those providing administrative support or offering feedback. It offers an overview of MDR, as well as providing supporting guidance and background material that will help all participants to get the most out of the process.

MDR is rooted in the Church's responsibility to support its ministers, and to provide structured means for reflection and review of their ministry.

A key feature of MDR is the annual review meeting – a significant event that provides an important opportunity for ministers to share their reflections, insights and hopes with others who have a responsibility for their well-being and for their growth in ministry. But MDR is about much more than this. At its core, it is not just an annual event but an ongoing process of reflection and learning, of reshaping ministry in the light of experience and feedback, of identifying and addressing blockages to progress and growth, and of celebrating successes and affirming gifts and graces.

This ongoing process feeds into and is shaped by the connexional supervision programme, which ministers are required to undertake, with its bi-monthly supervision sessions.

**Chapter One** provides a quick overview of the principles that form the backdrop to MDR and of the key elements of the annual review meeting. It also explains the rationale behind MDR; describes who is covered; and unpacks how it relates to the connexional supervision programme.

**Chapter Two** considers the aspects of ministry that may provide a focus for ongoing reflection as part of MDR, with specific suggestions for deacons, presbyters, superintendents and district chairs respectively.

**Chapter Three** provides practical guidance about the annual review meeting. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the participants and outlines the preparation required for the review meeting, including the gathering and sharing of feedback. There are some suggestions about how to conduct the review meeting, and how to identify hopes, goals and areas for learning and development. This chapter also offers guidance about recording the key outcomes of the review meeting, and includes report templates.

## Quick guide to the principles of MDR

MDR is:

- a **development review process** that supports ministers both **to grow in their ministry** and **to contribute to circuits and districts in their mission**
- part of a framework (which also includes the supervision programme) for ministers to engage in **reflective practice** in the **context of their current appointment**: within this wider framework, MDR provides for an annual **review meeting**
- a **tool and not an end in itself**
- a **connexional scheme**: intended to be **consistently employed across the connexion**, allowing for familiarity and parity, with a degree of **flexibility** in its implementation
- **transparent** in terms of what information is shared, and with whom it is shared.

## How to get the most from MDR

Each component of the MDR process is intended to be **rooted in prayer and reflection**.

All who are involved are committed to ensuring that MDR is a **worthwhile process for the minister** concerned and will benefit when that is the case.

**Mutual respect** and the **valuing of the individual** are at the heart of the scheme and it depends on a **collaborative approach**.

**Trust** in MDR and in the relationships within the process is crucial.

## The annual review meeting

### When?

The main review meeting should be a face-to-face meeting that takes place once each connexional year, and at an interval of approximately twelve months.\*

Responsibility for convening the review meeting normally rests with the ordained contributor. The lay contributor and ordained contributor decide between themselves who chairs the meeting.

All correspondence in preparation for and following the review meeting can be undertaken electronically.

\* Whilst it is expected that circuits and districts will carry out review meetings on a regular and annual basis, the precise timing and the extent of the gap between meetings may vary according to circumstance. Where a minister is considering an extension or a new appointment, it would, arguably, be beneficial if the review meeting took place before the spring Circuit Meeting. Similarly, for those taking sabbaticals in the summer, an early meeting would assist in making plans and decisions. This will inevitably have implications for the spacing of the meetings, and may lead to some variation in the length of time between reviews.

## Who is involved?

Three participants are closely involved in each MDR meeting (the 'review meeting'):

- an ordained contributor
- a lay contributor
- the minister

### For circuit ministers:

- the minister
- the superintendent minister ('the ordained contributor')
- a lay person agreed by both ('the lay contributor')

### For superintendent ministers:

- the superintendent
- the district chair ('the ordained contributor')
- a lay person agreed by both ('the lay contributor')

### For district chairs and the warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order:

- the chair or the warden
- an ordained contributor – drawn from a panel of ministers who have recently served as district chairs or who are past Presidents of the Conference – acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Conference ('the ordained contributor')
- a lay person agreed by both ('the lay contributor')

## Purpose

The review meeting will enable the participants – prayerfully and reflectively – to:

- review together the minister's work over the past year, in the context of their current appointment and against any hopes and goals set and recorded at the previous meeting – noting **successes, challenges, changes in circumstances and learning**
- identify together **new hopes and goals** for the coming year in the context of circuit/district/connexional priorities
- identify together areas for **learning and development** to support the minister during the coming year (informed by any development needs identified during the previous year's supervision programme)
- identify together any **points of action relating to the wider context** of the person's ministry.

## Outcome

The **outcomes** of the review meeting – the set of **hopes and goals**, the **areas for learning and development**, and **points for action regarding the wider context** that have been identified – will be agreed by all three participants and a record made.

The minister and the ordained contributor will each retain a copy of these recorded outcomes.

A report will also be agreed for feeding back into the minister's supervision programme, using the '**Report from the MDR team to the supervisor**' form.

## Why MDR?

### Standing Order 743 – Ministerial Development.

(1)(a) This Standing Order applies to:

- (i) every presbyter or deacon in circuit or district appointment, every District Chair, the Warden and deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order;
- (ii) every supernumerary who has entered into a formal agreement with a Circuit to undertake pastoral responsibility in one or more Local Churches.

(b) Every such person shall engage in ministerial development review, a process which enables each such presbyter or deacon to reflect, with input from others, on how his or her ministry is being experienced and fulfilled both in relation to the Church as a whole and within the particular context in which his or her ministry is being exercised.

MDR is about affirmation and encouragement, as it seeks to support a minister's growth and development, both in a local context and within our shared vision of 'Our Calling' (the Methodist Church's calling is "to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission").

MDR is also a manifestation of pastoral care. Opportunities for ministers to engage in dialogue about call and role, to discuss direction with reference to resources and shared vision, and to renew purpose and focus, are crucial to well-being.

MDR recognises, embraces and reinforces mutual respect and accountability – the partnership and interdependence that is at the heart of Christian discipleship, of Christian learning and of connexionalism. MDR is, at its best, a process that enables rather than controls, that empowers, and that releases gifts and skills in the service of the ministry of Christ, in which all Christians share.

## Who is not covered by MDR?

Not all presbyters and deacons serve in the appointments listed in the Standing Order. Those ministers who are not in the active work (ie, supernumeraries and those without appointment) are not expected to undertake MDR. Those who are in other appointments are not required to undertake MDR because it is expected that there will be an equivalent process in the appointment in which they serve.

## How do MDR and supervision relate to each other?

### What is supervision?

The Interim Supervision Policy ([www.methodist.org.uk/supervisionpolicy](http://www.methodist.org.uk/supervisionpolicy)) provides a framework for and outline of the requirements for supervision for all ordained ministers in active work, in order to ensure that there is greater accountability and support for ministerial practice.

Whilst the word 'supervision' has many different meanings and usages, supervision within this context in the Methodist Church is understood as an exploratory and reflective process in which one or more ministry practitioners meet together with a trained, resourced and approved supervisor to reflect on their vocation and practice. The intention of such regular and focused reflection is to support a change of culture in the life of the Church from one which is often isolated and vulnerable practice, to one of accountability, support and increased safety.

Supervision serves the development and well-being of the minister, but also safeguards the well-being of those ministered to in the name of the Methodist Church. It is a means of oversight and accountability, as well as a place for support and learning.

It operates as both a **redemptive** structure – a practice that shapes the encounters and interactions that happen within it in ways that promote human health and well-being in the light of God's self-revelation – and as a **means of grace** in which God's transforming presence may be encountered.

Supervision in the Methodist Church has three main functions, to:

1. support the minister in their vocation and practice and development.
2. safeguard the interests of those amongst whom ministry is practised, including those of children and vulnerable adults.
3. ensure that the ministry offered in the name of the Methodist Church is collegially and accountably reflected upon in the light of God's mission and the purposes of the Methodist Church.

Effective supervision in this context rests on three pillars:

Normative:

- shared theological reflection on the practices and vocation of ministry within the horizon of God's mission and within the Methodist Church's code of conduct
- shared identification of risks to self and others and the identification of steps to ameliorate those risks.



Formative:

- support for lifelong learning, formation and development in ministry through shared reflection
- exploration of creative approaches to demanding issues of ministry and relationships as they arise.

Restorative:

- ensuring that the vocation and work of the minister is shared, valued and nurtured
- ensuring that health and well-being issues for ministers are addressed.

Supervision in the Methodist Church is being introduced as a collegial and accountable process that is supportive of lifelong learning in ministry and is a realistic means by which Christians in ministry can “watch over one another in love” for the sake of everyone involved.

## Ministerial Development Review

MDR meetings are in addition to supervision. MDR is development focused. It serves the formation of the minister through ongoing reflection on practice and an annual snapshot of their work that is informed by feedback from their ministry context.

The MDR meeting is a broad-perspective look at a person’s ministry, homing in on two or three hopes and goals and two or three areas for learning and development. It is not intended to be an in-depth exploration of particular besetting issues. However, MDR may identify significant issues that should be followed up in future supervision sessions.

A short report should be made from the supervisory process to the MDR process on the form provided, and from the MDR process to the supervisory process at its conclusion, naming any issues to be taken forward/monitored in supervision.

Supervision may set some of the MDR agenda. If, for instance, recurrent patterns or threads keep emerging within a minister’s supervision, it would be important for supervisor and supervisee to decide whether and how these should be flagged up to the MDR review meeting as things needing ongoing attention. Hence, supervision is one of several feedback tools into MDR.

The ‘Agreed record of supervision’ form, completed at the end of each supervision session, includes a box to log the “main topics discussed including notes of any follow-up actions from previous supervisions”. That record is intended to be a useful point of reference for when the supervisor and supervisee are asked to annually report into the MDR process, via the **‘Report from the supervisor to the MDR team’** form.

The Interim Supervision Policy (Section 2.2) requires that an annual report of the supervisory process goes to both the minister in oversight (and the ordained minister conducting the MDR) and the lay representative.

The purpose of the '**Report from the supervisor to the MDR team**' is to summarise the issues and benefits of supervision during the year and together with the supervisee to consider what might be a useful focus for the MDR process. The report covers:

- topics covered in supervision during the preceding year
- areas of ministry *not* considered in supervision
- progress made on issues (if any) referred to supervision from last year's MDR process
- development needs identified during the preceding year's supervision that might usefully form part of the MDR process
- any further development needs, in the light of the context of the supervisee's ministry and any planned changes to their context or responsibilities
- any other resources that might be necessary to address these areas of development, in addition to the following year's supervisions.

The form is completed by the supervisor following a conversation with the supervisee. If there are areas of disagreement or nuance that the supervisee wishes to note, these are recorded in the 'Comments from supervisee' box.

Following the annual MDR meeting, the MDR team are asked to complete the '**Report from the MDR team to the supervisor**' form. The purpose of this report is to inform the supervisor of the focus and any outcome of the MDR process and to refer back to supervision any issues best pursued or monitored in that relationship during the following year. The report covers:

- the hopes and goals discussed during the MDR and any areas of learning and development identified
- any resources being made available to support the minister's development
- any particular work that the MDR team is recommending should be monitored or attended to in supervision during the following year.

## Templates

In the following pages we have included copies of the templates for the '**Report from the supervisor to the MDR team**' and the '**Report from the MDR team to the supervisor**'. These are also downloadable from the Methodist website at [www.methodist.org.uk/mdr](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mdr)

# Report from the supervisor to the MDR team

Formal supervision is understood by the Methodist Church to make an important contribution to the way in which authorised ministries are overseen and held accountable. The Interim Supervision Policy (Section 2.2) requires that an annual report of the supervisory process goes to both the minister in oversight (and the ordained minister conducting the MDR) and the lay representative.

The purpose of this report is to summarise the issues and benefits of supervision during the year and together with the supervisee to consider what might be a useful focus for the MDR process. A further report from the completed MDR process should be sent to the supervisor on the separate form provided.

It is intended that the supervisor and supervisee both prepare for a conversation about this report; that it be completed by the supervisor following the conversation; and that if there are areas of disagreement or nuance that the supervisee wishes to note that these be recorded in the section at the foot of the form.

## 1. Names

Supervisee

Supervisor


## 2. Topics covered in supervision during the preceding year:

- a. Please list those topics covered in supervision during the year  
(eg colleague relationships, tiredness, (where applicable) supervising others' work)

--

- b. Please list areas of ministry that have not been considered in supervision  
(eg preaching, vocational discernment, mission initiatives)

--

c. **What (if any) issues were referred to supervision from last year's MDR process?**  
**(If none, proceed to question 3)**

• **What work has been done in these areas and what progress has been made?**

• **Are there any outstanding issues arising from this work that need further attention?**

**3. Bearing in mind the following headings, please comment on any particular development needs you have identified during the course of the year's supervision that might usefully form part of the MDR process.**

- 1.1 Vocation (call and commitment)
- 1.2 Vocation (ministry in The Methodist Church in Britain)
- 2. Relationship with God
- 3. Personality and character
- 4. Being in relationship with others
- 5. The Church's ministry in God's world
- 6. Leadership and collaboration
- 7. Learning and understanding
- 8. Communication

4. Bearing in mind the context of the supervisee's ministry and any changes to their context or responsibilities planned for the coming year, are there any further development needs to be considered?

**5. Resources for development**

a. How could any of these areas of development be resourced through next year's supervisions?

b. What other resources might be necessary?

Signed (supervisor)

Date  /  /

Comments from Supervisee (if needed)

Signed (supervisee)

Date  /  /

**This report is confidential to: the minister concerned; the supervisor; their minister in oversight; the minister and lay representative involved in the MDR.**

**Please list the names of those to whom this report is being sent:**

# Report from the MDR team to the supervisor

Formal supervision in the Methodist Church makes an important contribution to how authorised ministries are overseen and held accountable. If you are involved in the MDR of a minister you should have received a report from that minister's supervisor as required by the Interim Supervision Policy (Section 2.2).

The purpose of this report is to inform the supervisor of the focus and any outcome of the MDR process and to refer back to supervision any issues best pursued or monitored in that relationship during the coming year.

## 1. Names

Minister being reviewed

Minister conducting review

Lay representative


## 2. Report of MDR process:

- a. Please summarise here for the benefit of the supervisor the hopes and goals discussed during the MDR and any areas of learning and development identified.

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- b. Please inform the supervisor of any resources being made available to support the minister's development, eg training opportunities, support mechanisms, etc or of any changes in responsibilities or priorities resulting from the MDR.

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### 3. Referral to supervision

Bearing in mind the purposes of supervision as set out in the Interim Supervision Policy, is there any particular work that the MDR team is recommending should be monitored or attended to in supervision during the coming year?

- **Normative:** (such as the relationship between vision and practice; issues arising from any Code of Conduct; the identification and management of risk; boundary issues and the handling of power)

- **Formative:** (such as the ability to reflect; specific learning needs related to a new context or role; specific skills to be developed)

- **Restorative:** (such as self-care; attention to vocational discernment; the impact of the work upon the minister or their family)

Signed (MDR team)

Date   /   /

Comments from minister being reviewed (if needed)

Signed (minister  
being reviewed)

Date   /   /

**This report is confidential to: the minister concerned; the supervisor; their minister in oversight; the minister and lay representative involved in the MDR.**

**Please list the names of those to whom this report is being sent:**



# CHAPTER TWO – THE FOCUS OF MDR AND HOW TO PREPARE

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**Chapter Two** considers those aspects of ministry that may provide a focus for ongoing reflection as part of MDR, with specific suggestions for deacons, presbyters, superintendents and district chairs respectively.

## Holistic growth

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As we exercise our ministry, we all need to recall our calling and our gifts, and to know what is required of us. Likewise, we all need and deserve to be provided with the appropriate resources and environment in which to fulfil our ministry, and we all need and deserve to be enabled to grow in God's service.

Roderic Gray in his book *How People Work* (Harlow, Pearson Education Limited, 2004, p. ix) sets out what he calls "a catechism of excellence" – nine key statements that each of us should be able to make if we are to contribute positively within an organisation:

- I know what I'm expected to do.**
- I want to do it.**
- I have the ability to do it.**
- Processes help me to do it.**
- I have the resources to do it.**
- The environment is right.**
- Someone (who matters to me) will notice if I do it.**
- I know how well I am doing it.**
- I can do it better next time.**

MDR encourages ministers to consider the dynamics of call, gifting, context and growth. It also gives permission to explore the questions that will inevitably arise from such considerations, and to ask the questions in the company of those who have an understanding of the local context and who have a designated role in providing support and oversight. MDR's ultimate objective is holistic growth. It involves an annual set of processes, but its wider background is an ongoing process of prayerful and critical reflection and a sustained commitment to learning and self-development.

## Reflective practice

One of the key components of MDR is the process of 'reflecting on practice' – something that every minister is strongly encouraged to do throughout their ministry, both on their own and in the company of others, and at the heart of their supervision programme. The 'practice' in reflective practice refers to the minister's ministry, while 'reflective' refers to the careful consideration of the experiences and the situations that the minister faces throughout the year. Sometimes the minister may seek the views of others and may form supportive relationships that will help them in their attempts to unpick and understand their experiences. Effective reflection leads to insights and understanding that can then be applied to future 'practice'.

Effective ministers will reflect on their ministry throughout the year, not simply immediately prior to the review meeting. This habit of reflection will yield insights that will lead to growth and development outside the review meeting, but it will also add to the information available for the review meeting discussion. How far the minister chooses to reveal the full extent of their insights will be up to the individual concerned – but it is hoped that the insights gained from reflecting on their ministry will inform the minister's responses to others' feedback, and will be a useful source of observations and comment about aspirations, future hopes, and areas for learning, development and growth in the review meeting.

**For more information, see Skills and good practice in MDR**  
([www.methodist.org.uk/mdr](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mdr))

## Ministry-focused

The focus for MDR is the minister's work – public, representative ministry as manifested in specific actions and activities. The focus should not fall on personality traits or the minister's intimate and personal spirituality, which are more appropriately explored elsewhere (unless a minister chooses specifically to share their thoughts or concerns in this area during the process). In this sense, the scheme is ministry-focused, rather than minister-focused. As a rule, MDR is about those things that ministers are called to do in God's name at their ordination.

## The focus for reflection for deacons

### Here are several resources to draw on:

- the *What is a Deacon?* report  
[www.bit.ly/what-is-a-deacon](http://www.bit.ly/what-is-a-deacon)
- the Diaconal Order's *Rule of Life*  
[www.bit.ly/diaconalruleoflife](http://www.bit.ly/diaconalruleoflife)
- the Ordination Service for Deacons  
*The Methodist Worship Book*  
(Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999, 313-328)
- competencies of Deacons and Presbyters  
[www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

### What is a Deacon?

The Conference report *What is a Deacon?* (2004) notes that the ministry of deacons can be characterised as “witness through service”. The report goes on to note that this ministry can be expressed in:

- embodied acts of pastoral care, mercy and justice, and being or acting as a prophetic sign
- spoken acts of evangelism, apologetics, theological and prophetic interpretation, teaching, encouragement, the articulation of faith and human experience, and the leading of worship that may include preaching.

The report also quotes *The Windsor Statement on the Diaconate*, in which deacons provided the following valuable description of their ministry:

“Christ-focused, people-centred and lived out in a lifestyle both active and contemplative ... We increasingly perceive our role to be pioneering and prophetic, responding to needs, proactive in opportunity through commitment to mission and pastoral care within and beyond the Church. Opening doors of opportunity, encouraging others to take risks, the contemporary diaconate acting in its capacity as ‘agent of change’, engages imaginatively and collaboratively with issues of justice, poverty, social and environmental concerns. We often find ourselves spanning boundaries, especially official ones of Church and society.”

## Rule of Life

Another focus is provided for deacons by their membership of the Methodist Diaconal Order, whose discipline they are required to keep and in whose life they are required to share. The Order's *Rule of Life* provides a framework for helping to deepen not only individual discipleship, but also for developing the common life and witness of the Order. For deacons, therefore, MDR may also provide an opportunity to reflect on how they have followed the *Rule of Life* and how they have fulfilled their responsibilities as members of the Methodist Diaconal Order. These responsibilities are not only about personal devotion and individual spiritual growth, but also about the recognition and exercise of mutual accountability and interdependence, expressed through nurturing and supporting others and helping to develop the Order and enrich its life. The Methodist Diaconal Order is, by its nature, a learning community, and the *Rule of Life* provides a disciplined framework for reflection. For deacons, MDR will hopefully build on this foundation by enabling specific focus on the way in which spiritual maturity nurtures and supports the public tasks and roles of diaconal ministry in a circuit and district context.

### Ordination Service

**Extract from the Ordination Service for Deacons**  
**(*The Methodist Worship Book*, p.317):**

God has called you into the Order of Deacons among his people.

In his name you are

- to assist God's people in worship and prayer;
- to hold before them the needs and concerns of the world;
- to minister Christ's love and compassion;
- to visit and support the sick and the suffering;
- to seek out the lost and the lonely; and
- to help those you serve to offer their lives to God.

Fulfil your calling as disciples of Jesus Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

In all things, give counsel and encouragement to all whom Christ entrusts to your care. Pray without ceasing. Work with joy in the Lord's service. Let no one suffer hurt through your neglect.

This ministry will make great demands upon you and upon those close to you, yet in all this, the Holy Spirit will sustain you by his grace.

## The focus for reflection for presbyters

### Competencies expected of deacons

The Methodist website lists the competencies expected of deacons and presbyters in Full Connexion: [www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

See also the Template (**Areas for your reflection prior to the MDR meeting**) starting on page 27.

#### Here are several resources to draw on:

- the *What is a Presbyter?* report  
[www.bit.ly/what-is-a-presbyter](http://www.bit.ly/what-is-a-presbyter)
- the Ordination Service for Presbyters  
*The Methodist Worship Book*  
(Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999, 298-312)
- competencies of deacons and presbyters  
[www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

### What is a Presbyter?

The Conference report *What is a Presbyter?* (2002) describes as follows the ways in which presbyters are 'representative' people. Presbyters:

- focus the presence and activity of God-in-Christ in the Church and the world, by both embodying the love of God and also pointing to its otherness.
- offer the Church and the world constantly to God through Christ.
- help the Church and the world to see themselves and each other more clearly in the light of God's grace and justice.
- represent and act on behalf of Christ and the universal Church (both geographically and historically) in a particular time and place.
- lead others to play their appropriate parts in fulfilling the same calling.

The report also provides a list of the tasks of a presbyter ('public' activities are highlighted in bold). A presbyter:

- **prays** – personally, **representatively and publicly**.
- studies the Bible and other sources intelligently and appropriately, in order to "**interpret those sacred stories of our community, so that they speak a word to people today**".
- is actively involved in **planning, leading and participating in acts of worship and acts of mission, and in developing new forms of worship and mission in ways that are sensitive and responsive to the particularities of the context in which she or he ministers**.

- presides at Holy Communion and at Baptism and Confirmation.
- shares in pastoral responsibility with other presbyters, usually exercising oversight in Christian communities, offering leadership and vision, and ensuring that decisions are made according to Methodist practice.
- is responsible, in collaboration with appropriate church bodies, lay officers and any ordained colleagues, for the pastoral care of church members (though not always 'doing' the care at first hand).
- represents the church in the community.
- seeks to grow as a woman or man of God, and enables and encourages others to grow in their discipleship, and to be equipped for evangelism and mission.
- ensures that his or her family and personal commitments are not neglected.

### **Ordination Service**

**Extract from the Ordination Service for Presbyters  
(*The Methodist Worship Book*, p.302):**

God has called you into the Order of Presbyters among his people.

In his name you are:

- to preach by word and deed the Gospel of God's grace;
- to declare God's forgiveness of sins to all who are penitent;
- to baptize, to confirm and to preside at the celebration of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood;
- to lead God's people in worship, prayer and service;
- to minister Christ's love and compassion;
- to serve others, in whom you serve the Lord himself.

These things are your common duty and delight. In them you are to watch over one another in love.

In all things, give counsel and encouragement to those whom Christ entrusts to your care. Pray without ceasing. Work with joy in the Lord's service. Let no one suffer hurt through your neglect.

This ministry will make great demands upon you and upon those close to you, yet in all this, the Holy Spirit will sustain you by his grace.

## Competencies expected of presbyters

The Methodist website lists the competencies expected of deacons and presbyters in Full Connexion: [www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

See also the Template (**Areas for your reflection prior to the MDR meeting**) starting on page 27.

## An additional focus for reflection for superintendents

### Here are several resources to draw on:

- the *What is a Circuit Superintendent?* report  
[www.bit.ly/what-is-a-circuit-super](http://www.bit.ly/what-is-a-circuit-super)
- the Superintendents' Handbook  
[www.methodist.org.uk/superintendentshandbook](http://www.methodist.org.uk/superintendentshandbook)
- competencies of superintendents  
[www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

## What is a circuit superintendent?

The Conference report *What is a Circuit Superintendent?* (2005) identifies the following responsibilities of the superintendent:

- To inspire people, lay and ordained, to be imaginative and to participate in the development of new vision by empowering them to share their ideas and act upon them.
- To encourage and enable colleagues and others to discern the work of God by stimulating theological reflection and helping people to see that they can learn from failure as well as from success.
- To provide examples of taking risks, once the realities of a particular situation have been rationally assessed and a commitment has been made to accept responsibility for the results of the action to be undertaken.
- To ensure that colleagues enable the voice of the least and lowest to be heard and the poor and disadvantaged to be Included.
- To provide models of exercising power (not least with regard to the management of resources) with authority, justice and love.
- To challenge colleagues and others who exercise power in other ways.
- To ensure that after governance decisions are made by the relevant bodies (eg the Circuit Meeting) appropriate people, systems and strategies are set in place to enact them, and proper processes established to review them.
- To ensure that human, financial, capital (eg investments and buildings) and technological resources are deployed to fulfil the particular objectives set for the implementation of those strategies.

- To help any other presbyters appointed to and stationed in the circuit to fulfil their presbyteral role to the best of their ability and similarly, where appropriate, to help any deacons and lay workers in the circuit to exercise their roles.
- To ensure that any probationers in the circuit are appropriately inducted into the exercise of public ministry, and properly supervised, supported and assessed.
- To ensure that colleagues are appropriately and adequately supervised in their professional practice.
- To ensure that all schedules and other tasks required by Standing Orders are completed.
- To ensure that information is coordinated and thereby enable the whole circuit to participate in the processes that lead to the Circuit Meeting making policies.
- To enable the Circuit Meeting to formulate policies under the guidance of the Spirit, challenging, guiding and advising it as appropriate.
- To ensure that the Circuit Meeting holds itself accountable to churches in the circuit and to the wider Connexion.
- To ensure that the circuit adheres to and fulfils its purposes.
- To embody in their practice to the best of their ability the values, rules and regulations of the Methodist Church, and thereby to provide a model for colleagues and the circuit.
- To help the people in the circuit to develop an understanding of the proper role of presbyters (and, where appropriate, of deacons and lay people) and of the stresses and strains.
- To help colleagues to discern which expectations or priorities of members and churches are unrealistic or irrelevant and thereby help to liberate people from them so that they can take imaginative steps of faith in the light of new missional opportunities.
- To help colleagues to inspire confidence in the Gospel of grace through their own spirituality of prayer, confidence, enthusiasm, happiness, and vulnerability and through their Bible study and theological reflection.

The report notes that “none of the above is the exclusive responsibility of the superintendent alone, but part of the shared nature of oversight in which he or she has a distinctive role”. These descriptions are, however, useful in providing an additional focus for superintendents as they reflect on their ministry during MDR.

### **The Superintendents’ Handbook**

The tasks and practical responsibilities of superintendents are detailed in the *Superintendents’ Handbook* – available online at [www.methodist.org.uk/superintendentshandbook](http://www.methodist.org.uk/superintendentshandbook)



## Competencies expected of superintendents

The Methodist website lists the competencies expected of superintendents:  
[www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

## An additional focus for reflection for district chairs

### Here are several resources to draw on:

- the *What is a District Chair?* report  
[www.methodist.org.uk/conferencereports2006](http://www.methodist.org.uk/conferencereports2006)
- competencies of district chairs  
[www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

## What is a district chair?

The Conference report *What is a District Chair?* (2006) identifies the following **qualities of a district chair**:

- Spiritually and theologically aware.
- Able to inspire people, lay and ordained, to be imaginative.
- Able to empower people to develop new vision by sharing their ideas and acting upon them.
- Able to create space for creativity, sensitivity and awareness within the district and agencies in the wider community, and to share the fruits of theological reflection with them.
- Committed and able to create a culture in which mission is the priority, growth a possibility and the grace of God the focus.
- Adept at promoting understanding of both the communities and institutions served by the district and also of the nature and activity of God, so that the district and its constituent parts can decide on its mission priorities, articulate realistic objectives and formulate appropriate strategies.
- Effective in encouraging people and groups to review their existing organisation and resources so that they can create structures which enable the mission objectives to be achieved (this includes helping people to have the confidence to tackle long-term issues associated with such matters as staffing levels, redundant churches, ecumenical opportunities, the demographic structures of some congregations and church planting opportunities).
- Highly sensitive to the way she or he interacts with others.
- Effective in promoting collaborative working and mutual accountability, whilst also able to cope with the 'lone nature' of much of the work.
- Credible as someone who can represent the district, the Conference and the wider Connexion not only within the Church but also ecumenically and in wider society.

- Adept at providing models of how power may be exercised (not least with regard to the management of resources) with authority, justice and love, and able to challenge colleagues and others who exercise power in other ways.
- Open to the energy of the Spirit; able to inspire confidence in the Gospel of grace through his or her own spirituality, prayer, confidence, enthusiasm, happiness, and vulnerability, and through his or her Bible study and theological reflection; and adept at enabling others to be and do the same.

The report reassuringly notes that “because they are human, chairs will not be able to fulfil all that they and others would ideally like”. These descriptions are, however, useful in providing an additional focus for district chairs as they reflect on their ministry during MDR.

### **Competencies expected of a district chair**

The Methodist website lists the competencies expected of district chairs:

[www.methodist.org.uk/competencies](http://www.methodist.org.uk/competencies)

**See also the Template (Areas for your reflection prior to the MDR meeting) starting on page 27.**

# Areas for your reflection prior to the MDR meeting

Consider your contribution in relation to some or all of the areas of ministry below:

- Prayer and worship
- Teaching, preaching and education
- Pastoral care and spiritual guidance
- Community engagement
- Evangelism
- Leadership, vision and oversight
- Organisation, including management and administrative functions.

Consider aspects of your ministry which have been particularly fulfilling.

What was a peak experience or high point – a time when you had a particular sense that you were fulfilling your calling as a minister?

What is it that you most value about the nature of your role?

What are the key factors that convince you of your calling?

What are your hopes in relation to strengthening the positive 'core' of your ministry?

Identify examples: highlight areas of enjoyment, fulfilment and success.

Consider aspects of your ministry in which you feel you have been able to use your particular gifts and graces.

**Consider aspects of your ministry that you have found particularly challenging.**

Consider if any of your skills and knowledge and gifts and graces are being underutilised and if you believe they could be exercised more fully. Be specific and consider how this might be addressed.

Consider issues to do with systems, structures and the organisation of work, use of time etc, which have hindered you. Consider whether or not these issues are within your control. Who or what might be able to help? How might you proceed?

How have you been able to learn from failure, as well as success?

**Consider your relationships with other people.**

Which relationships have been particularly constructive and affirming? Can you explain what it is that makes these relationships 'work'?

Which relationships have been challenging? What are the issues? Is there anything you or others can do to help these to become more fruitful?

## Consider your supervision programme

What areas of ministry have been covered during this past year?

What areas of ministry haven't been covered this year?

How have your supervision sessions enabled you to be more faithful and effective as a minister?

How do these reflections feed into hopes and goals for the coming year?

What areas for learning and development emerge from these reflections?

(A Word version of this Report Template is available at: [www.methodist.org.uk/mdr](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mdr).)

# CHAPTER THREE – THE ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING IN MDR

**Chapter Three** provides practical guidance about the review meeting. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the participants and outlines the preparation required for the review meeting, including the gathering and sharing of feedback. There are some suggestions about how to conduct the review meeting, and how to identify hopes, goals and areas for learning and development. This chapter also offers guidance about recording the key outcomes of the review meeting and includes report templates.

## Roles and responsibilities in the MDR meeting

The MDR meeting comprises three people:

- a lay contributor
- an ordained contributor
- the minister

### The lay contributor

The choice of a lay contributor, in terms of whether they are from within the circuit (or the district, in the case of MDR for district chairs) or from elsewhere, is to be determined locally. The benefit of identifying someone from within the circuit is that they understand the context and have more specific knowledge of the minister's work and the life of the circuit. They will therefore be able to offer an informed perspective on the specific requirements and the demands faced by ministers in their appointment.

Both the minister and the ordained contributor must agree the choice of lay contributor and wish to work alongside them. It is also important that the person has the requisite skills to undertake the role. Such skills may have been nurtured during roles they have undertaken in a secular context, as well as by relationship-building roles in a church context.

It is of vital importance to have a structured conversation with potential lay contributors to ensure that they:

- understand the requirements of the role.
- are willing to take it on for a significant period of time (ideally for at least three rounds of ministerial review to provide some continuity and to take advantage of growing confidence).
- have the required skills – questions around their perceptions of the role and what they feel they can bring to it would be appropriate.

### Essential skills and abilities of lay and ordained contributors

- Demonstrating empathy and tact
- Building rapport
- Probing and listening
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Engaging in constructive dialogue
- Summarising and analysing potentially complex hopes, goals and needs
- Discretion and ability to observe confidentiality
- Displaying a collaborative approach.

### The ordained contributor

The ordained contributor's role and perspective will complement that of the lay contributor, in that they will bring a particular understanding of ordained ministry and of how circuit/district/connexional needs and priorities shape the minister's work. They should also bring to the review an open-mindedness and a willingness to share in dialogue. For these reasons, the ordained contributor is often the superintendent.

In large circuits, where it is not feasible to expect the superintendent to be involved in MDR for every minister within the circuit, it is appropriate for the superintendent to designate another senior minister to deputise for the superintendent at some review meetings. Similarly, it may not be practicable for a district chair to be involved in MDR for all the superintendents within their district. The most suitable replacement in these cases is an ordained minister who routinely substitutes for the superintendent/district chair, ie someone who can bring up-to-date knowledge of the circuit's/district's mission and priorities and a current understanding of the pressures and issues facing ministers in the area.

### The minister

MDR is about affirming and encouraging those who are called to ordained ministry, and helping growth and development both within present appointments and as part of the Methodist movement shaped by 'Our Calling' ("to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission"). The benefits for each minister will be enhanced when the following are brought to the MDR process:

- The insights gathered from ongoing reflection on their own practice.
- The insights gained from their supervision programme.
- Prayerful consideration of the feedback offered by others.
- Readiness to enter into a dialogue about their ministry.



## A potential role for an MDR administrative officer

A circuit or a district may wish to appoint an MDR administrative officer. Where such an officer is appointed, aspects of their role may include:

- maintaining a list of the ministers involved
- triggering the process
- organising timing of meetings
- keeping all parties informed and reminding them of what needs to be done
- distributing guidance notes, etc
- taking a role in coordinating the receipt of feedback (although this is an area where it may be more appropriate for the ordained contributor or lay contributor to take a lead role – it will be dependent on how the circuit/district chooses to organise this aspect of MDR)
- registering the fact that the review meeting has taken place.

## Before the review meeting

### First steps

The first step in arranging the review meeting is likely to be made by the ordained contributor. They will want to contact the minister to whose review meeting they will be contributing to suggest times for the review meeting and to identify and agree a lay contributor. If the superintendent/district chair/Secretary of the Conference is intending to ask a substitute to take their place, this should also be discussed.

### Preparatory conversation

Preparation by all participants is key to a worthwhile review meeting. Therefore, a preparatory conversation between all three participants would be valuable. The ordained contributor and the lay contributor should decide between themselves who will take the lead in convening any preparatory meeting.

The primary focus of a preparatory conversation is likely to be about the gathering of feedback (see page 34 on how this should happen). This conversation is also an opportunity for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to be clear about which of them will be undertaking the various coordinating and chairing roles during the remainder of the process.

As well as assisting in confirming a range of details, a preparatory conversation is also a useful marker to encourage all parties to organise their reflections and begin their preparations for the subsequent review meeting. This should include reflection by the minister on themes suggested by the '**Areas for reflection prior to the MDR meeting**' template (see p 27).

The timing of this preparatory conversation will vary according to what is feasible, but an early conversation (even as much as a couple of months in advance) can serve not only as an opportunity to confirm details but also to highlight the need for, and value of, a considered approach to the process as a whole.

Such conversations can be difficult to arrange, given the competing pressures on the time of those involved. Email or telephone conversations may be a substitute for a face-to-face conversation, but the value of such a preparatory meeting is not to be underestimated.

### **In more detail – logistical arrangements**

It is important to agree the time and place of the subsequent review meeting at an early stage. It is necessary to ensure that:

- the review meeting will be undisturbed
- there is sufficient time to do the meeting justice – allow for a meeting of up to two hours.

### **Documents**

Any particular documents to which reference is likely to be made at the review meeting itself should be circulated to all participants in advance. These should include:

- documents relating to feedback
- the written agreed reports from the previous year's review meeting.
- the '**Report from the supervisor to the MDR team**', from the minister's supervision programme.
- (for the first meeting in a new appointment) the circuit or district profile and the letter of understanding.

### **Theological reflection**

Selecting an apt scriptural passage, hymn, text or image to accompany the review process (ideally, chosen according to the needs and circumstances of each individual minister) may provide a focus for reflection and a source of encouragement.

A selection of these is included in the Appendix.

### **In more detail – gathering and sharing feedback**

The MDR scheme's overriding purpose is the affirmation, support and development of the minister in their work. This can only be achieved by acknowledging prior achievements and challenges, and building on this experience. Reflection of this sort will always benefit from the perceptions and observations of others.

The gathering of such feedback during the MDR scheme requires consideration of three questions:

- What information is to be sought?
- Who is best placed to provide it?
- How can it best be gathered and shared?

### **What?**

Chapter Two has highlighted the aspects of ministry that should provide the topics for MDR, and thus for the gathering of feedback. There may be some specific issues that deserve special emphasis. It may be helpful to focus on one particular aspect of ministry in seeking feedback, rather than looking at the totality of the role each year. It will be helpful if the questions mirror any specific issues that the participants have identified for their own reflections or which have emerged during supervision sessions. Whatever areas are to be explored, there needs to be agreement, and all three participants need to discuss and accept what information is to be sought and how.

Following agreement regarding the areas for feedback, an agreed set of questions needs to be drawn up. There are some suggestions below (in the '**Questions and topics for those providing feedback**' template) but these questions should be the subject of discussion and agreement. It is important that the questions invite examples, and avoid leading to answers that, for instance, comment on the minister's personality traits. Questions should be chosen according to the knowledge and involvement of those who are being asked for feedback: not all will be suitable for every individual.

### **Who?**

Again, there should be mutual agreement in relation to who is to be asked to provide feedback for reflection and use in the review meeting. The normal starting point should be a list of potential contributors drawn up by the minister. Some will choose the church or circuit stewards but there will be many others also who could provide helpful insights. In the case of deacons, fellow deacons may be a source of feedback in relation to questions around contribution to the Order.

In all cases, there will be a number of sources of feedback – ideally a mix of lay and ordained people who have worked with the minister or experienced their ministry from a range of different perspectives. What is most important is that those who are asked to provide feedback are those who are best able to provide informed responses by citing examples and being specific about actions and outcomes. The result will be a series of observations and reflections that are necessarily subjective, because they are about what others have perceived, but which have credence because they are given by those who have directly experienced the person's ministry.

If a particular aspect or theme is being explored, this may mean that those who are asked to provide feedback will vary year on year according to their relationship

to the aspect or theme. Such a circulation of respondents will also avoid over-burdening certain individuals, who may find it difficult to find something new to say if approached too regularly.

### **How is it gathered?**

It will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide between themselves which of them should take the lead in gathering and sharing feedback.

If written feedback is being sought, questions could be sent electronically or in hard copy, depending on the preference of those involved. Likewise the responses could be submitted in either format. It is important, however, that attention is paid to confidentiality. Care should be taken in protecting the information contained in any written communications and access should be restricted to the members of the MDR meeting. It should be clear to respondents how their comments will be shared with the minister, whether or not they will be attributed, and how and for how long they will be stored (all copies of written feedback – electronic or hard copy – should be destroyed after the MDR review meeting).

It may be decided to gather feedback through one-to-one conversations between the ordained or lay contributor and those invited to provide feedback. It will be important to be aware that such conversations may stray towards impressions and anecdote and the content may be difficult to convey to others. However, if properly managed, a one-to-one conversation will allow the ordained or lay contributor to probe and to explore the real meaning of any comments or observations. The option for a one-to-one conversation also ensures that any who might not be comfortable in submitting written feedback are able to contribute.

It is important to explain to all who provide feedback why they have been asked to provide it and how their feedback will be shared with the minister. Those providing feedback should also be encouraged to observe principles of constructive feedback:

- Avoid vague, ambiguous statements.
- Be specific and provide examples as far as is possible.
- Be as objective as possible.
- Avoid labels, criticism and judgements of the person.
- Focus on the person's actions rather than the person.
- Provide encouragement.
- Be succinct.

### **How is it shared?**

It is helpful to share the feedback in advance of the review meeting to give participants time to absorb and reflect on its contents.

Consideration should be given to whether the gathered feedback should be shared with all parties in its raw form, or whether the ordained or lay contributor who gathered the feedback should combine the individual pieces of feedback into a single report, having extracted the key themes and weighed up the usefulness and validity of the various comments. There is great merit in the production of such feedback reports – thoughtful summaries of the feedback received from various sources, which have teased out the salient points and expressed them in a constructive and helpful manner.

It may be, however, that the participants decide that there should be no attempt to summarise or interpret, with all participants reading the feedback in its raw form. If it is decided that the feedback should be shared with the minister in this way, there is a need also to decide whether or not the feedback should be made non-attributable. Such decisions potentially have implications for the relationship between the recipient and the giver of feedback that need to be considered.

As already noted, those providing feedback should be told how their feedback will be shared with the minister.

It is important to note that there may be times when difficult issues are expressed in the gathered feedback. The manner and the context in which this feedback is, in turn, given to the minister are of vital importance if the comments and observations are to have constructive impact. Discretion and good judgement are required on the part of the ordained and lay contributors. It may be that some of this feedback is not circulated in advance but shared with care during discussion at the meeting. Where **difficult** issues are raised by the feedback, the ordained and lay contributors should consider in advance of the review meeting whether there are particular strategies that could enable the minister to move forward and begin to address the issues raised. It is important to try to avoid making the minister feel overwhelmed and undermined. A joint problem-solving approach, in which the participants work together during the review meeting to find a constructive way forward, will be optimal.

**For more information, see these presentations on:**

Giving Effective Feedback – [www.bit.ly/2icc94W](http://www.bit.ly/2icc94W)

Receiving Feedback – [www.bit.ly/2zDsoBq](http://www.bit.ly/2zDsoBq)

**All copies of written feedback, notes of oral feedback and feedback reports – both electronic and hard copies – should be destroyed once the review meeting has taken place.**

# Questions and topics for those providing feedback

The following are important principles for you to consider when providing feedback:

- Avoid vague, ambiguous statements.
- Be specific and provide examples as far as is possible.
- Be as objective as possible.
- Avoid labels, criticism and judgements of the person.
- Focus on the person's actions rather than the person.
- Provide encouragement.
- Be succinct.

Provide positive examples of how the minister has exercised their role, considering some or all of the following areas\* of ministry:

- Prayer and worship
- Teaching, preaching and education
- Pastoral care and spiritual guidance
- Community engagement
- Evangelism
- Leadership, vision and oversight
- Organisation, including management and administrative functions

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\* It is likely that some of the suggested areas will not be relevant to every minister and ministry.

Are there needs that they have been unable to meet? Be specific. How do you know this?

Where has the minister made particularly noteworthy contributions? Explain why and how.

Which of the gifts and skills are particularly valued? Be specific. How do you know this?

## At the review meeting

### Purposes of the review meeting

Whilst the review meeting represents a formal point of reflection, punctuating the various developmental activities and processes that have happened throughout the year, it is also only a point in an ongoing journey of reflective practice. It draws on the feedback that has been collected from various people who have knowledge of the minister's work, on the perceptions and reflections of the ordained and lay contributors, on the insights derived from the minister's supervision programme, and on the minister's own reflections about their experiences over the past year.

When carried out in the right spirit and using an appropriate approach and skills, the review meeting will provide affirmation, and a source of confidence and reassurance for the minister, as well as a sense of hope, direction and possibility. A well-conducted meeting will be a very positive experience for all the participants, and will create new ideas, perspectives and understandings and an increased potential for effective action.

### Achieving a positive outcome

In order to achieve a positive outcome, the following values and beliefs need to be adhered to by all participants:

- A sense that the meeting has importance and value.
- An atmosphere of trust and openness.
- A sense that all are being listened to.
- A concerted effort to create shared meanings and understandings.
- A commitment to making any necessary changes happen.
- An unthreatening and supportive approach.

Whilst the meeting is about communicating knowledge and ideas and exchanging views and information, it is also an opportunity to express emotions and feelings – and it is important that the minister is given permission to do this. 'Listening well' by the ordained and lay contributors is the key to success, since the meeting is for the minister, to give them the permission and opportunity to focus on their work (including feelings about it, joys and triumphs, perceptions and concerns, and challenges and difficulties).

The other participants should be willing to take on board their roles in helping the minister to uncover the sources of any frustrations or problems and to find ways forward. Ultimately, the ordained contributor or the lay contributor, as appropriate, may need to take responsibility for raising a particular problem in another forum (and with the minister's permission), particularly where there are obstacles to their ministry that are outside the minister's control.



It is hoped that the meeting will be more than simply an exchange of information and perceptions, but also an opportunity for dialogue – for a meeting of minds. Exploring issues together in a spirit of appreciative inquiry will be helpful. This means using probing conversation to explore what has been working well in the life of the minister, to uncover learning from these positive experiences, and to establish ways in which that learning can be applied elsewhere in their ministry and in the wider Church.

### **Facilitating the meeting**

It will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide between themselves which of them should take the role of the chair.

The chairing role in the review meeting is much like that in any other meeting – in that it is important that the chair facilitates discussion (and handles any strong feelings which threaten to derail the conversation), whilst ensuring that the required areas are covered.

In the case of the review meeting, most of the time should be occupied by the minister talking, with the other two parties interjecting largely to prompt discussion and to check for understanding. Active listening and thoughtful questioning, probing, reflecting back and summarising are central to the process.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is fundamental in MDR. Information that is shared and the discussions which take place within the context of the process must not be divulged to others except with the prior agreement of each of the three participants.

### **Note-taking and report-writing**

It is important that the meeting's key outcomes – hopes and goals, areas for learning and development, and points for action regarding the wider context – are recorded so that they can be followed up subsequently. It will also be necessary to complete the '**Report from the MDR team to the supervisor**' form, to feed into the minister's subsequent supervision programme. However, it is important that any other notes of the conversation are destroyed following the meeting.

## The remit of the review meeting

The review meeting will provide an opportunity to draw together a range of general and specific reflections by focusing on three areas:

- Reviewing the minister's work over the past year, in the context of their current appointment, and against the hopes and goals identified at the previous meeting.
- The identification of new hopes and goals for the coming year in the context of circuit/district/connexional priorities.
- The identification of areas for learning and development to support the minister during the coming year.

### Reviewing the past year

The meeting will provide an opportunity for the minister to talk about the successes and the high points of their recent ministry, as well as any difficulties or frustrations which they might be experiencing. During the meeting, it will also be appropriate to draw on the feedback received from those who have received and shared in this ministry over recent months, as well as issues that have been identified in the minister's supervision programme.

There should be an opportunity, too, to explore the organisation-wide issues and relationships that have caused concern or created obstacles for the minister.

A reflection on the minister's recent ministry will also need to draw upon the hopes and goals agreed at the previous review meeting. During the first meeting in a new appointment, it may be appropriate to refer to the circuit or district profile and the letter of understanding. Identifying the discrepancies between anticipated and actual activities and outcomes, and trying to find explanations for these, may lead to a consideration of structures and systems and of the ways in which these may help or hinder ministry.

### Identifying hopes and goals

One of the expected outcomes of the review meeting is the identification of hopes and goals for the coming year.

While the language of 'hopes and goals' may not sit easily with 'ministry' in everyone's minds, it is a way of helping to focus where the minister should expend their energy. Agreeing the hopes and goals means taking into account:

- particular projects, initiatives or aims towards which the minister wants to direct their efforts
- the minister's theologically informed sense of direction and vision
- the particular circumstances of the circuit or district
- circuit/district/connexional priorities and needs

- the particular gifts which the minister brings to their role – and how these might be utilised both in the local context and also for the benefit of the wider Church
- the minister’s family and personal commitments
- appropriate links to the ministry of others within the circuit/district/Connexion, and ways in which the energy and support of others can be sought and appreciated.

A focus on hopes and goals should be creative, optimistic and realistic.

## Areas for learning and development

The review meeting will also focus on areas for learning and development. Some of these may arise from the minister’s observations on their ministry and the aspects that they have found particularly challenging. Others will arise from new hopes and goals. Others again will arise from a deeper understanding of gifts and graces that should be allowed to grow and develop.

MDR is in itself a learning process and it is hoped that it will encourage ongoing ‘reflection on action’ as an integral part of the practice of ministry. MDR, however, is also designed to help the minister consider how far their ministry and their experience might be enhanced through particular learning opportunities.

One of the outcomes of the process, then, will be a set of learning needs for the minister concerned, or the requirement for other means of support. These should be recorded and followed up accordingly.

This should be seen as part of the minister’s continuing development in ministry (CDiM). It should fit naturally into that flow of learning and development that began when they left training and which is, hopefully, continuing to inspire and equip their ministry.

There are four key learning areas that CDiM is intended to address:

- Learning to inhabit ministry and enter into leadership and oversight responsibility.
- Deepening theologically reflective practice in context, and so expanding horizons for mission and ministry.
- Deepening engagement with Bible and Christian tradition, with one particular focus on ministers’ growth as worship leaders and preachers.
- Growing in holiness, and confidence in evangelism and seeking justice.

Try to ensure that any learning needs that are identified in the MDR meeting engage with at least one of these learning areas – ideally one that the minister hasn’t had much chance to give attention to recently.

While structured, formal opportunities for learning and development might sometimes be the best way of meeting particular learning needs, there are other ways of

supporting learning which may not involve a course or programme. These alternative interventions may be particularly effective in releasing gifts or building relationships.

Leading a project or taking part in a collaborative arrangement in which the minister learns from others with different roles or different perspectives are possible means both of developing the minister and of enhancing the work of the Church.

Action learning – an approach to learning in which individuals work together in groups (or ‘sets’) on real problems encountered in work and on the actions which can be taken to help resolve them – is already being used in some contexts within the Methodist Church (where they are sometimes known as ‘reflective learning sets’).

Sabbaticals provide opportunities for growth and development. For ministers who are due for a sabbatical, the MDR meeting could provide an opportunity for a discussion about how this time might best be spent in order to meet the particular needs which the minister has identified. For ministers who have just taken a sabbatical, the MDR meeting could be a chance to reflect on, discuss and celebrate any learning and development brought by the sabbatical.

## Structuring the review meeting

Whilst the manner in which different areas are covered is more fundamental than the order in which they are introduced, it may be helpful to sequence the meeting as follows:

### Starting

- Opening prayer.
- Identification of the values and beliefs which will achieve a positive meeting and positive outcomes.
- Establishment of the importance of confidentiality and secure storage of data.
- Establishment of a procedure for note taking and report writing.

### Reviewing the past year

- Invitation to the minister to talk about the high points of the previous year.
- Consideration of the feedback received from others – the minister should be invited to respond to the feedback provided and should be given an opportunity to give their own perspective on the activities described.
- Observations from the ordained and lay contributors, in conversation with the minister. The approach should be one in which there is regular space for questions and invitations to the minister to offer his/her point of view, ie a dialogue in which the focus is on drawing out learning and identifying useful pointers for the future.

- Affirmation of the minister's positive commitment and dedication – and impact – and a celebration of the past year's joys.
- Opportunity for the minister to raise difficulties, concerns and challenges and to highlight what they perceive as obstacles to their ministry. The atmosphere should be such that the minister feels able to express frustration or disappointment. The ultimate objective is that, together, the participants should begin to find ways of overcoming some of the difficulties through creative problem-solving. This may mean new ways of working by the ordained contributor, or it may mean finding others who can help with particular aspects of the work. This may mean accepting, too, that some aspects of the minister's work may now be undertaken in a different way or done by others, or not done at all.
- Consideration of issues worked on in supervision, including those needing further attention (see '[Report from the supervisor to the MDR team](#)' sections 1-2).

### New hopes and goals

- Consideration of the minister's particular gifts and graces, in conjunction with a discussion about their vision and aspirations for their future ministry.
- Discussion about the Church's priorities and of the circuit's particular mission should help to inform some suggested hopes and goals for the minister.
- A framework for discussion, such as the following\* series of questions, could help the minister prayerfully articulate their hopes and goals and think about how to achieve them:
  - What is the vision for the Methodist Church? What is the vision for the circuit/district in which I exercise my ministry? What do I personally long for – for the churches/circuit/district which I serve/for the Methodist Church? (A vision).
  - What is my place in realising that vision? What have I discerned about my calling? What gifts and graces do I have which enable me to fulfil that desire? How can I work collaboratively with others to realise that vision? (A mission).
  - What do I hope to achieve? What difference do I seek to make? (A hope or goal).
  - When will I achieve it? What specific things contribute to realising that hope or achieving that goal? (Objectives).
  - How will I achieve these things? Who will be involved? What resources will be needed? (A strategy).
  - How will all this be put into practice? (An action plan).

### Areas for learning and development

Charting of some of the areas for learning and development which arise from a consideration of hopes, goals, gifts and graces, informed by development needs identified in supervision (see '[Report from the supervisor to the MDR team](#)' sections 3-5)

\* Mark Wakelin in *The Making of Ministry*, ed Angela Shier-Jones, Peterborough, Epworth, 2008, pp. 124-5

## Finishing

- Consideration of any needs for change in the wider context (circuit, district or connexion) and formulation of relevant action points.
- Confirmation of a procedure for report-writing (including the '[Report from the MDR team to the supervisor](#)'); drafting reports, if desired.
- Reaffirmation of the importance of confidentiality; confirmation regarding the destruction of notes, including notes regarding feedback.
- Closing prayer.

## Disagreements

While recognising that, in the vast majority of cases, participants will be committed to the success of the process, there may be occasions when disagreements occur.

If these disagreements cannot be resolved between the parties concerned, the matter should be referred to another party for investigation and mediation.

In the case of presbyters, the matter should be referred to the district chair.

In the case of deacons, the matter should also be referred to the warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order.

In the case of superintendents and district chairs, the matter should be referred to another party acceptable to all three participants.

**In more detail:  
writing post-  
meeting  
reports (see  
also the report  
templates)**

The purpose of post-meeting reports is not to record all the details of the conversation that took place at the review meeting but rather the outcomes of the meeting, particularly those which require follow-up and action. Therefore the review of the past year and the discussion of successes and challenges are not to be written up as a formal report, unless the minister specifically requests that they should be.

The MDR Reports normally cover three areas:

- [Hopes and goals for the coming year.](#)
- [Areas for learning and development.](#)
- [Points for action regarding the wider context.](#)

In addition, the '[Report from the MDR team to the supervisor](#)' should be completed.

Whilst the reports could be drafted after the meeting, there are significant benefits to drafting reports during the meeting itself, after the substantive discussions have taken place. If the reports are drafted during the meeting, it is more likely that that key points of the meeting will be captured. This will also avoid the risk of delays in drafting the reports, as memories fade and as other commitments take priority.

It will also avoid the risk of contested recollections and misunderstandings about outcomes. Where reports are drafted by one participant after the meeting has ended, they should be circulated to other participants for agreement.

Points for action regarding the wider context are likely to result from suggestions which have emerged in the meeting which need to be followed up or referred elsewhere. It is likely that such points will relate to systems, structures or resources, or to areas of the life of the Church which may benefit from gifts and graces which have been identified or emphasised during the meeting. Where there are wider implications or where input is needed from others, it may be necessary to share some parts of the report and to refer to the discussion at the review meeting. The nature and extent of disclosure needs to be agreed by the participants.

### The use of recorded information

Much of what emerges from the MDR process is for ownership by the minister and is not available to others outside the process. The main outcomes will be an improved understanding of ministry and enhanced reflection on practice.

The agreed written reports are for strictly limited circulation, and any further circulation or wider use should only be undertaken at the absolute discretion of the minister concerned.

Retention of reports should normally follow the protocols below:

- A copy of the agreed written reports about hopes and goals, areas for learning and development and points of action regarding the wider context should be kept by the minister and the ordained contributor only.
- Where the ordained contributor is not the minister in oversight, the ordained contributor's copy should normally be sent to and kept by the minister in oversight. This information will enable the minister in oversight to understand better the gifts, graces and developmental needs of the minister, so as to support the ways in which such needs are met, and so as to shape circuit, district and connexional activities to tap into gifts and to enable growth and development.
- The agreed written reports about hopes and goals and about areas for learning and development will be used during the following year's review meeting, unless the minister concerned has begun a new appointment.
- The agreed written reports kept by the minister in oversight should be destroyed when the minister's current appointment comes to an end. A minister may keep their own copies of the reports for as long as they see fit.
- Once the '**Report from the MDR team to the supervisor**' has been sent, it should be destroyed by the MDR team; similarly, the '**Report from the supervisor to the MDR team**' should be destroyed by the MDR at that point.

Wider circulation of the agreed written reports or of information discussed during the meeting should normally follow only the patterns set out below:

- As part of the minister's supervision programme, the 'Report from the MDR team to the supervisor' form should be completed and returned to the minister's supervisor.
- As noted above, it is likely that the report on points for action regarding the wider context will have implications which go beyond the three participants. Consequently, it may be necessary to share some parts of the report with a wider audience and to refer to the discussion at the review meeting in order to address the points which have been raised. The nature and extent of disclosure needs to be agreed by the participants.
- Information about areas for learning and development may be helpful for officers from the Learning Network as they seek to develop the Church's continuing ministerial learning provision to meet such needs. Ministers may wish to make available a note of their areas for learning and development in response to requests for information from district and connexional officers.
- Information discussed during MDR should not routinely be used by the stationing process. Some ministers may, however, feel that one or more of the agreed written reports could be helpful to the circuit invitation committee if an extension is being considered, or to the district chair when the minister's profile is being drafted in preparation for matching to a new appointment. In such circumstances, one or more of the reports could be made available to the committee or to the district chair by the minister concerned, but such circulation should only be initiated by the minister.

It is necessary to track how far action has been taken in response to the minister's requests and requirements, particularly where it has been agreed to refer matters elsewhere. A six-monthly review, where the superintendent/the district chair/the Secretary of the Conference (as appropriate to the minister concerned) sifts through reports and checks that required action has been taken, would be beneficial.



# Hopes and goals

Date of review meeting  /  /

Record **up to three** hopes or goals which you have identified as a result of reflecting on your ministry and which have grown out of the review meeting's discussion about your ministry and circuit/district/connexional priorities.

In each case, be specific about the support which you will need to enable you to realise your hope or achieve your goal, and suggest how you will know if you have realised or achieved it.

Some of your hopes and goals might be to focus more closely on an existing area / project / priority, and to do less of something else. If so, draw out the implications on the form below in terms of support needed.

## Hope/goal #1

Support you need and who might be involved

Anticipated milestones or indicators of achievement

**Hope/goal #2**

Support you need and who might be involved

Anticipated milestones or indicators of achievement

### Hope/goal #3

Support you need and who might be involved

Anticipated milestones or indicators of achievement

I agree that this is an accurate record:

Minister

Ordained contributor

Lay contributor


(A Word version of this Report Template is available at: [www.methodist.org.uk/mdr](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mdr).)

# Areas for learning and development

Date of review meeting   /   /

## Area for learning and development #1

Support/interventions/courses suggested

Action to be taken, and by whom

**Area for learning and development #2**

**Support/interventions/courses suggested**

**Action to be taken, and by whom**

### Area for learning and development #3

Support/interventions/courses suggested

Action to be taken, and by whom

I agree that this is an accurate record:

Minister

Ordained contributor

Lay contributor


(A Word version of this Report Template is available at: [www.methodist.org.uk/mdr](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mdr).)

# Points for action regarding the wider context

Date of review meeting   /   /

Are there changes or developments within the circuit/district/Connexion which would support your ministry? Do they have implications that go beyond the three participants at the review meeting? If so, note them here.

In order to address the points raised here, it may necessary for other participants to share some parts of this report with others not present at the review meeting. It may also be helpful to refer to parts of the discussion at the review meeting. The nature and extent of such disclosure should be agreed by the three participants.

**I agree that this is an accurate record:**

Minister	<input type="text"/>
Ordained contributor	<input type="text"/>
Lay contributor	<input type="text"/>

(A Word version of this Report Template is available at: [www.methodist.org.uk/mdr](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mdr).)

## Skills and best practice

Further background material is available online, exploring some of the skills and best practice that can support MDR and help to enable positive experiences for all participants: [www.methodist.org.uk/mdr](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mdr)

## Improving MDR

MDR has growth and development at its heart. Those of us with responsibility for supporting the MDR within the Connexional Team want our support to develop and improve as the process itself matures. To help this process of growth and improvement, we welcome feedback about this guidance in particular and about your experience of being involved in MDR more generally. Feedback should be directed to:

[mdr@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:mdr@methodistchurch.org.uk)

**Ministerial Development Review**  
**Methodist Church House**  
**25 Marylebone Road**  
**London NW1 5JR**



## Appendix

Some scriptural and other resources to accompany the review process that may provide a focus for reflection and a source of encouragement:

“As in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” Romans 12:4-5 (New Revised Standard Version, NRSV)

“Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.”  
Romans 12:13 (NRSV)

“They shall build up the ancient ruins.” (Isaiah 61:4)

### **This passage is read during the diaconal ordination service:**

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” Isaiah 61:1-4 (NRSV)

### **This passage is read during the presbyteral ordination service:**

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

Romans 12:1-18 (NRSV)

**From the ordination services:**

“This ministry will make great demands upon you and upon those close to you, yet in all this, the Holy Spirit will sustain you by his grace.”

Scripture quotations are from New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# Notes

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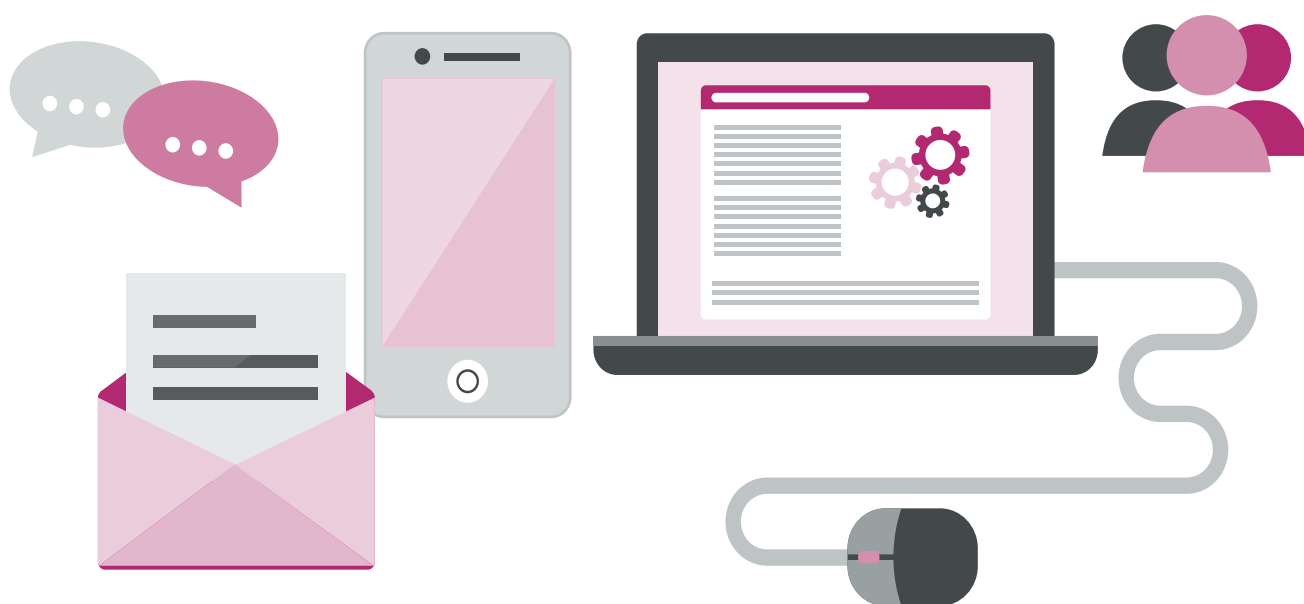
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## Remember, the Connexional Team is available to help you.



A full list of contacts can be found at:  
[www.methodist.org.uk/connexionalteam](http://www.methodist.org.uk/connexionalteam)

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# The Methodist Church

Produced by Methodist Publishing on behalf of  
Ministries: Vocations and Worship  
Methodist Church in Britain  
Methodist Church House  
25 Marylebone Road  
London NW1 5JR

Registered charity no. 1132208

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Revised and updated 2018



# Ministerial Development Review

A guide for ordained ministers and  
lay contributors involved in review