The Methodist Church
The Manchester and Stockport District

Policy for Supporting Lay Employees

Introduction

The purpose of this policy document is;

1. To evidence Manchester and Stockport District's commitment to supporting employers of Lay Employees[1] to ensure that the most appropriate work arrangements are in place. The reason we have this commitment is because we believe in the ministry of the whole people of God as in line with SO 575(4)
2. To evidence Manchester and Stockport District's outworking of SO 570 & 575 which relate to the District Lay Employment Sub-Committee and Secretary's roles in recruitment and the practice document on The Methodist Church website entitled Lay Employment Advisory Information.
3. To give additional good practice, which as yet is not within the online Lay Employment Advisory Information
4. To highlight the additional support to be offered to some lay employees who have specific vocational leadership roles

Manchester and Stockport District is in a covenant relationship with other Districts in the North West & Mann region and as such all in that covenant have adopted a version of this policy document.

[1] Lay Employees in the District, Circuit and local Churches including LEPs. This document does not cover Self Employed individuals but it may be appropriate to consider some of the best practices included in this document.

1. Appointments

The District Council shall designate the Strategy and Resources Executive (SRE) to be the District Lay Employment Sub-committee. Acting in this capacity the SRE will appoint:

a) a Lay Employment Secretary, who will be a member of the SRE and report regularly to it.
b) a Lay Employee Supporter who will offer Lay Employees the opportunity to gather on a regular basis.
c) a Chaplain (or chaplains) for lay employees to be available for pastoral support if needed.

2. Training

The SRE will ensure that:

a) a District training fund and other available funds are advertised to Lay Employees at least once a year.
b) line managers of lay employees across the District are offered training in their responsibilities once a year.

3. Pay

Manchester and Stockport District is committed to fair pay and justice for all Lay Employees, and therefore will support, encourage, and expect best practice by all employing bodies within the District. To this end the SRE will:

a) expect all employees to be paid the living wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation as a minimum. Where the role calls for qualifications (e.g. JNC) the appropriate pay scales should be followed.
b) promote the payment of salaries appropriate to roles for lay employees who are not employed to a specific external pay scale such as JNC. (See Appendix 1 for advice to employing bodies.)
c) promote annual increases in the pay of Lay Employees, either in line with the Living Wage Foundation or to match the stipend increases agreed by Conference each year. To this end the District shall remind employing bodies at least annually to review annual pay increases.

4. Other principles

The District will promote and encourage the following principles among employing bodies and line managers:

a) Employees should be employed by the most appropriate body to maximise peer support and create administrative efficiency.

b) The potential for conflict of interest if the line manager is also the employee's pastor should be considered and steps taken to ensure alternative line management or pastoral support is provided.
c) A comprehensive induction programme should be offered to new employees, to enable the employee to operate effectively. (See Appendix 2).
d) An annual appraisal including target setting should be carried out; this should normally include a review of the Job Description and Terms and Conditions of employment, leading to appropriate updates. (See Appendix 3).
e) Should lay employees transition between roles (for example resulting from career progression and changes in calling) within the same employer, care should be taken to undertake a full review of working environment and requirements.
f) The arrangements for workplace should be considered, including the following factors:
    - the optimum base for work
    - budget for provision of equipment
    - consideration for home working and lone working
    - the potential for isolation (especially in geographically large circuits or where their work is more specialised) and ways employees can be encouraged to take opportunities for meeting others from across the circuit, district and region that are appropriate to the context of their role
    - safeguarding

    (See Appendix 4.)
g) Using exit interviews to promote learning and growth. (See Appendix 5.)
h) Those involved with interviewing/selecting/managing lay employees should be given Equality and Diversity training, in particular in unconscious bias.[2]

5. Additional Support for Vocational Workers

It is critical to note that all roles may have an element of vocation to them. The Methodist Church notes that some Lay Employee roles have a distinctive leadership element to them, which means that these roles require additional support (SO575 (5)).

Examples of these roles will include:

- community development workers
- lay pastors
- family workers
- chaplains
- interns
- third/fourth age workers

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[2] As of April 2021 training is being developed by the Inclusive Church Implementation Group but in the meantime see https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/9012/edi-toolkit-1-4.pdf

- pioneers
- administrators.

These roles need to be advised to the Chair of District & Connexional Team by the employing body. SO 575 (5). In practice, currently this means contacting your District Employment Secretary, and the member of the regional Learning Network team responsible for lay employee development.

The District will promote and encourage the following principles among employing bodies and line managers:

a) A budget and time allocated to professional development should be included in the job description (for example retreats, reading days, training opportunities, spiritual advisors, courses etc.). (See Appendix 6 for potential sources of training.)
b) Lay employees in such roles should have the opportunity to relate appropriately to leadership groups in church and circuit. Employing bodies should ensure that the work of the employee is affirmed and supported and that there is a shared vision around the work. Where appropriate, employees should be part of the circuit staff meeting and employing bodies should consult SO510(1)(iv). Where SO510(1)(iv) does not apply consideration should be given to inviting the employee to attend the circuit meeting/church council at least annually. Consideration should be given to whether they will benefit from being part of District Synod.

Review date July 2022

Appendix 1: Pay scales on recruitment

To help inform conversations about pay this information has been taken from the Lay Employment Advisory Information on the website where worked examples are given.

There is a basic salary set for an employee and this is reviewed on an annual basis. Where the post requires the post holder to have specific experience and/or undertake a higher level of responsibility, the person specification must set this out clearly. Then, in recognition of this, where certain criteria are met, additional points in the areas of qualifications, experience and responsibilities can be awarded to give an increase to the basic salary. The following sections give some idea of the areas where increases to the basic salary could be made. These criteria must be clearly stated in the person specification before the position is advertised. A maximum of 3 points can be awarded in each of the following sections.

Section A: Qualifications specifically relevant to the post as set out in the person specification. Choose one of the following:

• A-level, Advanced GNVQ, level 3 NVQ, or equivalent = 1 point • Appropriate undergraduate Diploma or Degree, level 4 NVQ or equivalent = 2 points • Appropriate postgraduate Diploma or Degree, level 5 NVQ, Professional Qualifications or equivalent = 3 points. (Please note that the National Qualifications Framework is in the process of being correlated with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and that a fuller and updated list may be obtained from the Development and Personnel Office, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR)

Section B: Proven Ability (Previously referred to as Experience) • Can demonstrate how proven ability through past experiences show understanding of the work to be undertaken = 1 point. • Can demonstrate how proven ability through past experiences will contribute to the development of the post = 1 point. • Can demonstrate how proven ability through past experiences will contribute to strategic thinking = 1 point.

Section C: Responsibilities • Does the post hold Managerial and Supervision responsibilities? i.e. the postholder would be required to recruit, train and manage volunteers. If yes = 1 point. • Does the post involve complexity i.e. the post holder would be involved in a range of tasks covering various functions some of which may be described as demanding or complex? If yes = 1 point. • Will the post holder be responsible for making decisions? i.e. difficult or important decisions on a regular basis, within established policy, where many factors must be weighed, and /or makes decisions leading to changes in procedures affecting others. If yes = 1 point.

A maximum of 9 points can be awarded.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for lay employee induction programme

Rationale for establishing effective induction processes

A good induction programme is something that takes time to put together, and although a basic outline can be used as a framework for different employees with many things being standard across the spectrum of roles, each different job will have specific elements that need addressing. It is therefore important that the induction programme is re-visited with each new appointment so that churches are confident that new employees have everything they need to help them settle in, gain confidence and ensure they have the knowledge and support needed to perform their role.

This is not an exhaustive list, but suggestions for the things to consider when putting together an induction programme:

Systems and procedures

The lay-employee will need to be given information about how they:

- get paid
- claim expenses
- book leave
- monitor and record working hours – consider the value of timesheets, and conditions regarding TOIL (should be pre-agreed by line manager).
- identify and organise professional development training
- access IT support when needed
- organise cover if needed when absent

Job overview

Although this sounds obvious, it is worth re-visiting the main objectives and desired outcomes of the job so that the lay employee is clear what is expected of them, and the timescale(s) they are expected to work within

Who's who

Line manager – as outlined in the policy, it is recommended that the employee's minister should not be their line manager, although it is important that the minister has opportunity to feed into the process. The line manager should be somebody who has the time and skills to undertake regular 1:1 meetings with the lay employee (which will be more frequent in the probationary period of the job), and the ability to set targets and undertake appraisals.

Mentor – it can be beneficial to allocate somebody other than the line manager to undertake more of a mentoring/pastoral role so that the lay employee has somebody to 'bounce ideas off' or discuss minor issues that may arise between 1:1 meetings.

Organisational structure – which is likely to include:

- an overview of and introduction to each member of the leadership team, and their areas of responsibility

- people with responsibility for key ministries within the church
- Church council – and how the lay employee is expected to provide information and present reports to this group
- the wider circuit and relationship between the employing church (or churches) and the rest of the circuit

Professional development and peer support

Clear understanding of what is available and the annual budget and time allocation available to the lay employee

Introductions to other local lay employees/ network meetings and opportunities to connect with them

Churches/Circuits will need to address the following as part of any induction programme

- setting the lay employee up with telephone and email address and computer
- ensuring access to Safeguarding (leadership advanced module) training
- familiarisation of all relevant policies and procedures
- ensure that the lay employee knows who to contact if something isn't working

Appendix 3: Appraisals

It is strongly recommended that an appraisal is given at least annually, where the employee performance and priorities are reviewed and documented against the targets set the year before, and targets agreed and recorded for the year to come which would include not just output targets but also personal development and training targets. This process deserves at least an hour of the line manager's and employee's time, should take place in a quiet room free from distractions, and each person should have a couple of weeks' notice to prepare for it. There is a Lay Employee Performance and Development Review document which can be found at https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/employees-and-volunteers/supporting-local-ministry/supporting-lay-employees/lay-employment-review-process/

A specific form may not be necessary however, and a simple freestyle approach may also be productive though documentation and agreement is paramount.

It would be appropriate to review and update the job description at the same time, and potentially include a salary review in the case of significant change. Ideally a job description should be limited to 5 or 6 paragraphs, one of which is on personal development and training, and should show the expected percentage of employee's time that should be spent on these areas. A 15 paragraph job description without percentages usually results in 6 or 7 paragraphs not being worked on at all, and most of the time being spent on what the employer regards as a minor priority.

In addition the terms and conditions of employment should be amended with a simple letter of amendment where necessary if the hours have changed or the place of work has changed or the job is fundamentally different from what it was a year before.

Appendix 4: Workplace arrangements

1. Consider the optimum base for work

Much of the work may well be at a church or specified location. However, preparation work and report writing could be more effectively performed at home where it might be quieter or have more appropriate facilities, though it could be at a named church if it has appropriate facilities.

2. Budget for provision of workplace and equipment

Many churches and Circuits do not give adequate attention to these various potential costs and they should be included in the budgetary considerations when looking to employ someone. This is to do with having the tools in order to do the job.

Recommended equipment for employees who are at least partially office based is:

- Desk
- Chair
- Lockable storage
- Laptop
- Phone: either mobile or landline.

These need to be provided in a location with reasonable privacy at a reasonable temperature.

There would need to be a policy on personal use of some or all of these items, and guidance can be found at https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking

An employer may provide a phone, mobile or landline, for the conduct of the job. The employer should hold the contract, and in the case of a mobile retain ownership of the handset. An agreement then needs to be reached for a portion of the monthly contract to be paid by the employee to the employer for personal calls where they are allowed. Where the phone, mobile or landline, is supplied and owned by the employee, then agreement also needs to be reached on the sharing of costs.

3. Lone working

Refer to the link below for Connexional advice on lone working:

Downloadable Templates: Lone Working Risk Assessment and Guidelines. (methodist.org.uk)

Appendix 5: Exit interviews

Exit interview proforma to be found at:
[Downloadable Templates: Exit Interview Pro Forma (methodist.org.uk)]

It is recommended that all employees are given an exit interview. Learning could be passed back to the District:

- Remember the Pastoral cycle? It ends with celebration. A leaving event recognising their contribution may be appropriate.
- An exit interview is in essence to help the employer to learn from the experience of the employee. It is for the employer to learn what it could do better in the future and what it has done well this time and can build on in the future.
- The exit interview is in part a time also to celebrate with the employee their achievements, so as well as the questions on this form for the employer to learn from, take the time to celebrate with the employee all they have contributed.
- Only ask the questions you are willing to hear the answers to. For example, only ask them how well resourced they felt through the training you offered if you aren't open to providing more funds for training in the future.
- Choose the questions that are appropriate in your context. Don't overwhelm the person with too many questions, but equally do value their wisdom and don't dodge too tricky issues.
- Be clear with the employee who will see their answers – for example, will the line manager see the comments about them? What are the implications for this if the line manager is being scored rather low and the employee will remain around the context with another hat on?
- Using the form functionally:

  You might send them the questions to complete and return to the minister (if they are not the line manager) or the chair of the steering group, or to the line manager. In which case find another way to meet with the employee to celebrate with them their achievements.

- Using the proforma within a wider context of saying goodbye:

  Decide who will meet with the employee – the line manager usually, but maybe the ministers or some other church leader. In this final meeting, celebrate the employees' work and also to go through the contents of the exit interview questions. To do this, send them to questions in advance, ask for them to be returned before the meeting then you both know what is coming up and you can talk maturely about any issues raised.

- However you get the information and whoever oversees this, be sure to file the document in the employees personnel file, and be sure to take the learning from the document to the employer.

Below are the headings that can be found in the exit interview proforma, found at:
[Downloadable Templates: Exit Interview Pro Forma (methodist.org.uk)]

- ✓ Personal details
- ✓ Employees working history in the Circuit/Church/District
- ✓ Job Descriptions and duties
- ✓ Working conditions
- ✓ Relationship with line manager and colleagues
- ✓ Terms and conditions of employment
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Training and development
- ✓ Work/life balance
- ✓ Circuit/church/District facilities and services
- ✓ Circuit/Church/District reputation (be clear here that you are talking about the reputation of the employing body not 'The whole Methodist church')
- ✓ Reason for leaving
- ✓ Interviewers comments and further action

Appendix 6: Potential Sources of Training & Learning and Development

Learning and Development can be sourced via a number of means:

- On the job training and mentoring – By applying appropriate input from experienced people and by setting stretching objectives the employee can gain significant experience.
- Non-Christian specific skills e.g. Computer Development, Social Media training, managing volunteers, counselling skills, first aid and food hygiene etc. Training in these areas is available from local Voluntary Services organisations usually at a very small cost, from a local college, or online.
- Christian Specific Skills
  - Cliff College has developed and continues to develop a large number of short courses which support learning e.g. Family Ministries and Administrative Ministry
  - The other theological colleges such as Luther King House and the Nazarene Theological College will have additional courses
  - Connecting Disciples (Connexional and local) is run each year and offers workshops on a varied skill set
  - Learning Network events – there are a large number of courses offered by the Learning Network which may be appropriate.
  - Locally run Methodist & Ecumenical events.
- Peer support - employees are encouraged to establish and develop a network of colleagues for mutual support this may be initiated at Circuit, District or Regional level. These might be Communities of Practice, breakfast meetings or online. There are a number of Methodist job specific social media groups to support various roles.

- Knowledge Base – There are a number of Connexional mailings and professional mailing which will offer background information.

The key point is that Development does not always mean going on a course but there are many courses available. Isolation can be reduced through attending conferences as well as informal gatherings.