2024

The **Line Managers'** Handbook

A guide for line managers in the Methodist Church

The **Methodist** Church

Foreword

Line managing someone is an incredible privilege. It places you in a position to help someone flourish in their vocation. Your support, guidance and encouragement is key to someone being able to fulfil their job well.

You may be looking at this handbook because you've been line managing in a Methodist context for many years and want to check you're up to date with the role; you might just be starting out on the journey for the first time; or maybe you're contemplating becoming a line manager and wondering what the role is about. We hope this handbook helps you.

It's not just about ensuring policies and legal frameworks are implemented and followed, although these are essential; but it's about enabling a person in the role to which they feel called. It would be dishonest to say that line management doesn't require commitment and time: it does! It can be incredibly rewarding as you invest in someone and see them develop, grow and thrive.

At the heart of effective line management is good relationships. It's not just about fulfilling particular items on an agenda or signing off things when needed. It's about the ongoing support, through conversation and sharing in the journey, that helps those being managed to thrive and feel safe in their work. Many of our employees see their work as a vocation in which they are called by God to serve the Church and their line manager has a key role in discerning what God might be doing in their work.

Being a line manager is also a great development opportunity. By supporting someone in their work and helping them to thrive, we hone our own skills.

So to those of you who have been doing this role for many years, thank you for taking on this vocational responsibility and supporting the ministry of the whole people of God. If you are about to embark on the journey or considering it, we really hope that you are blessed as you help to enable others respond to God's calling.

Every blessing in Christ,

Line Managers' Handbook Writing Group
Composed of individuals from Ministries: Vocations and Worship, Human Resources and the Learning Network

The writing group would like to give thanks to the many people in different roles from across the Connexion who provided excellent feedback, suggestions and insights as we developed this resource. We would welcome ongoing feedback which can be sent to **mwm@methodistchurch.org.uk**

Prayer for Line Managers

Loving, affirming and calling God,
We give thanks for and celebrate the variety of roles you call people into
as they join in with the work of your reign
through serving the Church.
We embrace the diversity of your people
as the many members of Christ's Body,
each responding to your call,
inspired and equipped by your Spirit
to do their part for the work of your reign.
We particularly give thanks for those who respond to your call
to enable and support others in their work
through the role of line management,
often unseen, but incredibly important
as part of the ministry of the whole people of God.
May they be strengthened in their work,
filled with grace to work relationally,
and gifted with wisdom to navigate challenges,
through the love of Christ, for the sake of the world.
Amen.

Contents

Being a Christian Employer

As the Methodist Church, we employ people across the Church in a variety of roles, through a range of employing bodies. While most of these might be roles determined by churches, circuits and districts and managed by those local contexts, they are all part of employing in the name of the Methodist Church – whatever the role might be.

Being a Church employer should mean more than just meeting legal requirements, essential though this is. Our Christian faith means we respect human life and believe in the flourishing of all people – life in all its fullness (see John 10:10).

We recognise that we are part of one body with many members (see Romans 12:3-6). We also recognise that Christian discipleship includes responding to God's calling and for some people this response is to a Church role or job. We believe in the ministry of the whole people of God.

This must always be our starting point: being an employee of the Methodist Church, or a line manager, are both vocational responses to living out Our Calling. Living and serving as part of the Body of Christ, as disciples, means keeping love of God and love of neighbour at the heart of all we do: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35, *NRSVUE*).

This belief in mutual support and encouragement is key to the relationship between line manager and employee. Employees should not be seen as resources to be used to get what we want done. They are unique individuals who are much more than that. It is helpful to see line management as relationship focussed, which intertwines the needs of the community being served and the needs of the individual in fulfilling their sense of calling and vocation.

Building a relationship that enables mutual flourishing requires making time to communicate effectively. Proactive approaches are important where time is planned to engage regularly.

Effective relationships do not prevent challenging times from happening or difficult conversations needing to be had, but they do provide a strong foundation for tackling issues. And being a Church employer doesn't mean we disregard our legal responsibilities. Indeed, we treat them as a minimum and always ask ourselves, 'What does it mean to be more than this, to be a responsible and good employer?'

We hope this handbook helps line managers in effective oversight of their responsibilities, and provides advice for good practice that will help both line manager and employee flourish in their roles and ministries.

Not an Afterthought

A line manager should be identified at the start of the recruitment process. An employing body needs to know it has the capacity to effectively line manage before an employee is appointed. Without this, the employment relationship is likely to fail.

The proposed line manager should be involved in the recruitment process. This helps begin the relationship in the early stages and gives the line manager a good insight into the individual appointed before they start their role. While sometimes the minister might be the right person to manage a lay employee, often there are other people who are more suited to line management. This should be considered carefully before recruitment begins.

If the line manager is also the employee's ordained minister, it would be good practice to ensure that the employee has pastoral support outside of the line manager/employee working relationship. During the induction process the lay employee should be made aware of the lines of accountability beyond their direct line manager.

Avoiding Line Management by Committee

Some places have support groups (often called management groups) for employees. The risk is that this becomes line management by committee, which often has the effect of demotivating and disabling a person from thriving in their role. While they can be helpful in seeing the bigger picture, it is important that there is always a single line manager identified to communicate with the employee, ensuring clarity about the role and responsibilities. There is nothing worse as an employee than trying to meet the demands of several people and not having clarity about priorities.

If the role is extensive and covers work across a number of churches, circuits or areas of work, a support group may be beneficial. This enables 360-degree listening and sharing of perspectives. It provides the lay employee with a sounding board to discuss their work and potential new initiatives. There must only ever be one line manager. The employment support group should not form part of the management structure. It is not necessary for the employee to have contact with the support group; they are there to support the work from a strategic perspective and not as part of the day-to-day work – their contact should be with the line manager. Support groups have the possibility of overcomplicating good working environments and careful consideration should be made before implementing one.

Grounded in God

Many employment roles in the Methodist Church are fulfilled by people who identify as Christian and who recognise the job as their response to fulfilling God's calling. Therefore, where appropriate, the partnership can reflect their mutual discipleship as members of the Body of Christ. This recognition invites us to consider how we ground these relationships in God and how we recognise God's Holy Spirit at work through us.

A line manager can consider how, in one-to-one conversations, God's presence is recognised and how God's Spirit is discerned. How might conversations be framed in prayerful reflection and how might we provide space for God to speak to us?

It might be that time is allocated for prayer during sessions, where God is acknowledged and the work and decisions are offered to God. There might be times when reflecting on particular Bible passages or the ministry of Jesus could offer insight. There could be times to ask about where God is seen in pieces of work and what both lay employee and line manager are noticing about God at work in the role. This helps to place the work and conversations in the context of the ministry of the whole people of God.

However, the dynamics of power between a line manager and an employee should also be considered when offering prayer together. It is important that the employee is asked how they feel about this.

It is also important to recognise that the Methodist Church employs people who have different expressions of faith or no faith, and therefore line management should be sensitive to the person's beliefs. This could include allowing flexible working to accommodate religious holidays of other faiths. It is worth remembering that while the individual may not be a practising member of the Methodist Church, they will have been employed on the basis of being supportive of Methodist belief and ethos.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The Methodist Church aims to live out the theological conviction that God's love is for all, and that Our Calling bears witness to this. It is important that line managers and lay employees are familiar with the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity. There is mandatory training around EDI and unconscious bias for many lay workers – those specified by Conference are: lay pastoral workers; children, youth and family workers; and pioneers. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that everyone for whom they have responsibility has completed the mandatory training. A link to that training, and more information, can be found here: **methodist.org.uk/EDI**

As a line manager, you might also find this training valuable to help you be more aware of your own unconscious biases, as well as outlining any necessary legal requirements.

More information about EDI and employment can be found at:
methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/EDI

Safeguarding

The Methodist Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry. Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- promote the welfare of children, young people and adults
- work to prevent abuse from occurring
- seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused.

Safeguarding is ultimately the responsibility of the relevant trustee and employing body but it is regarded good practice for a line manager to ensure that safer recruitment has been duly followed, DBS/DPV checks actioned and training attended (this should be reviewed annually), relevant to the role being undertaken. For more information regarding safeguarding requirements, please visit **methodist.org.uk/Safeguarding**

As a line manager you should have also been through a safe recruitment process and it is advocated that you engage in safeguarding training.

Line Managers are Key to Flourishing

Pastoral heart

As an organisation the Church needs to uphold excellent employment practice, the foundation of which is always exemplary pastoral care. Christ modelled love for all in the way he compassionately cared, listened and responded to individuals' needs. As Christians we must remember and live out our high calling to follow Christ and his teaching.

> One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."
>
> (Mark 12:28-31, *NRSVUE*)

For a person to flourish best they must feel secure and supported. This is also true for a person in employment. They need to know that the organisational structures, including line management, are efficient, accessible and safe. Simon Sinek in his TED talk '*Why good leaders make you feel safe*' (**methodist.org.uk/SupportingLocalMinistry/OtherResources**) speaks of leaders who create an environment where people are able to have their voice heard and know that their managers are their advocates.

Flourishing

Many research studies from a range of organisations including the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) have reinforced the key factors that determine employee morale and motivation, including:

- day-to-day interaction with colleagues
- implementation of effective policy and working practices
- day-to-day relationship with line manager, behaviour of leaders

People who manage directly affect how individuals behave and perform and in turn, how they are likely to manage others.

The way in which an organisation operates is directly impacted by the behaviour and decisions of line managers. Poor practice can breach employment law, be high risk and costly to the organisation, causing far reaching reputational damage and negatively impacting the well-being of an employee.

Employee well-being

Well-being is likely to affect performance and when compromised it can impact adversely on a persons' health.

Simon Blake, the Chief Executive of Mental Health First Aid England, notes in the introduction to the excellent resource 'MHFA Line Managers' resource' (**mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/for-workplaces**):

> Mental ill health is typically caused by a range of factors, from relationship problems, financial worries, or poor housing, to poor management and/or stress in the workplace. But whether the primary cause is home or work-related, a healthy working environment – and, in particular, managers who are skilled in spotting early signs of mental ill health and providing appropriate support – plays a critical role in maintaining employee well-being.

It is well documented that one in four people will have mental ill health in a given year. Increased awareness to the signs and symptoms, as well as knowing how to signpost an individual for appropriate support, is instrumental in promoting recovery. In order to be aware and better respond we would highly recommend that those within management structures engage in mental health awareness training such as Mental Health First Aid training which is offered widely across the Connexion. If line managers aren't having regular one-to-ones to build a relationship then this may hinder honest conversations around mental health.

Advocating for the lay employee

The line manager needs to uphold the advocacy of lay employment, sometimes acting as the filter for feedback, noting that it needs to be both owned and specific if it is to be shared with the lay employee. If the lay employee is having issues with individuals, the line manager should speak and act appropriately on their behalf. Lay employees should also be made aware of the grievance policy so that they understand the processes available for tackling issues. Line managers can also signpost employees to other possible support such as chaplains or lay employee champions within the district.

Celebrating and valuing

Celebrating and valuing a lay employee and their work can make a big positive difference, both to well-being and to the impact/success of the work.

Commissioning the lay employee is a great way of introducing the worker and their role to the church and circuit. There is a commissioning of lay workers service in the *Methodist Worship Book* (p. 336), and suggested services here for some roles: **methodist.org.uk/AdditionalMethodistLiturgies**

Seek opportunities to regularly recognise and affirm the work and the worker. Consider how this could be done publicly, such as at a circuit meeting, as part of a service, or in a newsletter. It might also involve a simple thank you, or a bunch of flowers for example. Ask the employee how they would like themselves and their work to be prayed for.

At an annual review or appraisal, revisiting the job description might result in the need for a pay review, if changes involve increasing responsibilities for example. It is important that pay reflects the employee's responsibilities and is in line with the pay policy that applies in the local context. While the level of pay is not the responsibility of the line manager, they should be aware of how responsibilities are changing and liaise with the employment body. A helpful document, 'Guidelines for determining the salary figure for lay posts' can be found at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/Pay**

Adjusting pay based on responsibilities so that the employee is paid appropriately is separate to pay increases related to the Living Wage or in relation to the cost of living and inflation. It is the responsibility of the employing body to ensure pay continues to reflect current prices. The Living Wage policy of the Methodist Church can be found at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/Pay**

Managing workload

It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that the lay employee's workload is both manageable and within the confines of the contract. A good working relationship between the line manager and lay employee will be likely to enable the work to be both fulfilling and encourage full potential to be met.

Careful legal consideration needs to be made if an employee appears to be working/volunteering outside working hours within the remit of their employment.

Line managers need to ensure that contractual hours are met by the lay employee and a process for monitoring this needs to be in place ahead of employment. The employer also has a duty of care in upholding Working Time Regulations. More information can be found at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/WorkingTime**

The line manager should make it clear that all requests for work need to be signposted to them, thus safeguarding both the individual and the project.

Keeping effective records

The line manager should keep effective records capturing notes from meetings and decisions made, including any objectives, support being given and training. This provides a record of the journey of employment, including support given and expectations. These are helpful to review when next meeting to ensure both the employer and employee have followed through with any actions. It is good practice to ensure these are signed by both the line manager and the employee, so there is shared ownership over records. These records must be kept secure as they contain personal information. More details about data protection can be found at **tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection**

Working Time Regulations

The working time directive must be followed as this safeguards individuals and the employing body. Prior to employment a decision needs to be made about expected contractual hours, noting that an employee may have a fixed, flexible or annualised hour contract. Regardless of policy, it is imperative that the lay employee receives sufficient time for rest in compliance with Working Time Regulations.

Economic awareness

As noted above, economic stability impacts a person's well-being. It is important that a line manager is astute to how financial constraints induced beyond the control of the employing body and individual may impact on the lay employee.

This includes the lay employee's financial situation, but also the financial stability of the organisation. Conversations around economic pressure need to be both timely and pastoral in nature.

Clarity around Expectations and Role

Expectations of line managers

Across the Connexion line managers are the interface between the employing bodies (churches, circuits, districts or other) and their lay members of staff. They are responsible both for harnessing the resources at their disposal to achieve the aims of the employing body and for implementing the organisation's policies and practices. They work in collaboration with the Lay Employment Secretary.

Managers also have a significant impact on how lay employees feel about the workplace. As a manager, your role is likely to influence how your employees feel about their work and their results.

A line manager should:

- Conduct regular one-to-one meetings with the employee.
- Support the employee's well-being and help them to flourish.
- Lead by example, working and operating in the way you would expect your lay staff to work and operate.
- Manage performance, including setting objectives, motivating, coaching, encouraging learning, measuring performance (eg appraisal or development review) and handling underperformance. Line managers are entitled to ask for training or support in delivering these expectations.
- Plan and organise resources to meet agreed goals. This will often include, though will not be limited to, recruitment, work organisation and allocation, rota design and reporting on progress.

- Ensure the employee gets access and is given time for appropriate training and development.
- Help set direction for your employee and ensure that they are focused on what is important from day-to -day.
- Approve time off for various reasons including medical appointments, holiday and bereavement.
- Set and/or agree a budget and control spend against the budget.
- Embrace technology and try new things.
- Manage disciplinary and grievance issues. Although this is unlikely to happen often, a disciplinary issue may lead to dismissing employees where appropriate and if unavoidable, having followed appropriate procedures and behaved reasonably in reaching the decision. It is important to remember that whenever serious concerns are identified advice should be sought from the District Lay Employment Sub Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Qualities of a good line manager

To be a good line manager you need to be emotionally intelligent with good interpersonal skills, an interest in people and helping them be their best.

Below are the examples of how you might be expected to behave as a line manager:

- Be a role model for the organisation's values.
- Be available appropriately by prioritising your own work accordingly.
- Be aware of all the different ways of communicating and how communication can affect relationships.
- Be able to monitor work, hold an employee to account and help an employee understand why particular tasks or objectives may have not been done and help them work out how they will move forward in completing tasks or meeting objectives.
- Act as an ambassador for the employing body both internally and externally.
- Trust others and behave in a way that means people trust you.
- Adopt a flexible approach to managing people in different circumstances.
- Encourage others when they are trying out new ways of working.
- Challenge processes and contribute new ideas to make things better.
- Ask for and accept feedback to make things better and encourage others to do the same. Feedback in both directions should be an ongoing part of the relationship. Things should not build up to only finally be discussed at an annual meeting.
- Be a reflective practitioner.

Boundaries

The role of the manager is to get the best from others, therefore most of the manager's time is spent on leveraging their skills to enable and equip their employees to deliver results for the organisation.

If two people who are related or are, or were, in a personal relationship were to work together in circumstances where one had managerial authority over the other, a number of difficulties could arise. These include:

- conflicts of interest – the manager might, for example, find it difficult to carry out an objective performance assessment
- perceived or actual favouritism in relation to matters such as the granting of leave, allocation of overtime and approval of expenses claims
- perceived or actual victimisation if the relationship breaks down
- the risk of the inadvertent or deliberate disclosure of confidential information.

While an organisation/employing body will not wish to interfere with their employees' personal lives or relationships, on rare occasions it may however be appropriate and necessary for you as line manager to:

- be aware of personal relationships with other employees, ministers or volunteers that may affect employee performance and manage these appropriately, consulting with others where appropriate
- be informed if two colleagues working together form a personal relationship
- seek, where necessary for the smooth running of the work activities/ operations, to transfer one or both of the employees involved in a personal relationship, so as to prevent their working together
- ensure that all employees behave in an appropriate and professional manner while at work through setting the standards of behaviour.

Before taking any action on the above, please always consult with the District Lay Employment Secretary or the designated Employment Adviser.

Support for Line Managers

Just as valuing lay employees is important, it is also critical that your contribution as a line manager is valued. There is an updated training programme for line managers that is offered over a range of days or evenings. The revised course comprises of two parts:

Part One (3 hours) will enable participants to:

- identify the key skills/qualities needed to manage lay employees
- describe their role and responsibilities in managing lay employees in the Methodist Church
- clarify the different functions of line management
- understand their role in managing the employment cycle.

Part Two (3 hours) will enable participants to:

- understand their own operational preferences
- have confidence in making interventions
- enable lay employees to reflect on their practice
- support lay employee development and vocation.

More information can be found at: **methodist.org.uk/LayEmploymentSupport**

There's a wealth of information here: **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment**
Contact your district's Lay Employment Secretary, and Lay Employment Sub Committee (LESC) for support. Your own well-being is also important so consider the support mechanisms you have in place for yourself.

Preparing to Employ

This is the responsibility of the employing trustee body, however, the line manager should have a good knowledge of the job description and understanding of the process.

All good appointments begin with good preparation and planning. See, 'Step 4. Advertising, Recruitment and Selection for Lay Posts' at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment**

Ahead of creating a new role many factors need careful consideration, including:

- the missional and practical desires/needs of the church/circuit
- finances (*affordability, including salary, set-up costs, on-costs such as NI and pensions, expenses and training*)
- pay structures (*Methodism has adopted the Real Living Wage as a minimum*)
- scope of role (*churches can be over ambitious here especially when it comes to youth and children's workers – role clarity is paramount at this stage)*

- success factors for the role *(How will the church know that the role has been worthwhile and added to the life of the church/circuit?)*
- key relationships and stakeholders
- whether the role has Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) for the successful applicant to be a practising Christian (*This is an important area, for roles such as administrators it would be very difficult to legally justify, which we must, that there is a GOR for a practising Christian*)
- key policies and procedures
- working from home/hybrid/flexible working.

This is a key time for prayer, discernment and deep listening for God's calling.

Stage one: Preparing

Begin by thinking of what are the needs of the Church and what characteristics, skills and traits would make up your perfect hire. This will help guide and make your end to end recruitment process easier. The next step is reviewing the existing role documents or, for a new role, writing a job description and person specification. Guidance can be found here: **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/Recruitment/JD**

These questions may help:

- Why is this employment needed?
- What is the congregation's role in this?
- Do we need people to volunteer alongside the employee?
- What can the church offer?
- What are the expectations and are they realistic?

Stage two: Sourcing

Using different methods for sourcing candidates can be highly effective. Consider using an internet platform (web sourcing), a variety of social medial channels (such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn etc) and job boards. Also consider internal recruiting for finding candidates among your existing staff who have the advantage of the internal knowledge of the organisation. If recruiting internally, think about relationships that may be biased when putting together the interview panel.

Stage three: Screening

The goal of this is to narrow down your applicants to the very best candidates and begins with reviewing application forms and CVs. The goal of reviewing these documents is to find applicants whose qualifications, skills and experiences best match the requirements of the vacant position. Candidates who make the cut are shortlisted and invited to a face-to-face interview.

Stage four: Selecting

Selecting the very best candidate is an important part of the recruiting process. No matter how good your potential candidates may seem on the paper, meeting them in person is your ultimate opportunity to determine if they have the perfect combination of knowledge, skills and experience you are looking for. It is best practice to use a variety of selection methods that best fit your hiring needs, including a written exercise and or presentation etc. Ensure the environment you are interviewing in reflects the image you wish to give. Remember, the interview is as much for the candidate to ascertain if it is the right job for them as it is for the organisation to find the right candidate. Think about how you might provide good hospitality!

Stage five: Hiring

The hiring stage of the recruitment cycle consists of two main activities: job offer and pre-employment checks. Once you've found your ideal candidate, it's time to notify them by phone followed by an official job offer letter. A well-structured job offer clarifies all hiring terms. It includes precise information on compensation and benefits, working hours and contract length, as well as the employment start date. Sometimes a candidate won't accept your job offering immediately, so further negotiations will be needed in order to reach a mutually satisfying employment contract.

Stage 6: Onboarding

Onboarding is the final stage of the recruitment process and is all about making the new employees feel welcome and helping them ease into their new working place by teaming up with their new co-workers. Great onboarding starts with introductions, then moves on to orientation and ends up with training. When combined these activities guarantee a great start for any new employee.

Induction

Induction is a key part of onboarding. A good induction is a vital part of an employee's introduction to the organisation. It should be thought-through and thorough. It is best to think of it in terms of an induction period rather than an induction day. The connexional HR Team provide a very useful checklist that helps to plan what needs to be included before people start, on their first day, week and month. This can be found under 'New Employee Orientation' at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/KeyPolicies**

Essentially you need to consider which **people** the employee needs to meet and get to know, the **places** that will be important for them to find and which **policies** and **procedures** they need to understand to begin well. New lay employees will need time to absorb and familiarise themselves with all the information.

New employee orientation

Many of our lay employees do not come from a Methodist background. A training day has been developed which covers key aspects of Methodist history and doctrine, governance and structures and what it means to work in a lay ministry context in the Methodist Church. It also mirrors the line management training in exploring what lay employees should expect in regard to induction, policies and appraisal. Finally, it teaches some of the basic elements of pastoral care and working with appropriate confidentiality and encourages them to consider and value their well-being and vocation. This training is run by the Learning Network. More information can be found at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmploymentSupport**

Probation

Probation periods are usually between three and six months, depending on the role, and help to ensure the employment relationship is as both parties expected during the recruitment process. It provides time that is focussed on ensuring a successful foundation for the employment. The employee can ascertain whether the role is as they expected, and the employer can ensure the candidate is able to fulfil the requirements of the role. The line manager has an important role during the probation period. The line manager should ensure that the employee is given a clear focus on what they're expected to demonstrate during the probation period and adequately support them in meeting this. The better the induction and employee orientation, the greater the opportunity to flourish during the probation period. It is important to meet regularly with the new employee during probation, both to answer questions they have but also to reflect together on how things are going and whether expectations are being met. It is important to keep a record of these conversations as you would with regular review meetings.

If there are concerns or things are not working out as expected, these should be addressed early. Often an employee is unaware of something and a simple conversation deals with the issue. Never let things build up.

It may be that the employee has not fully demonstrated that they have passed their probation, but they are showing positive signs that they will do. In this situation, the probation period should be extended.

If during the probation period it is becoming apparent that the employee may not be able to fulfil the role and the employee is at risk of not passing their probation period, it is important to seek advice and support from your District Lay Employment Secretary, which should be done by the employing body. **Never pass someone's probationary period in the hope that things will be rectified in the future.**

It's important to celebrate and affirm when someone passes their probation period. It's a great opportunity to recognise that the employee is valued and that they're doing a good job. At the least, a letter of confirmation should be written, but the employing body may wish to mark it in a more celebratory way.

For more information, see 'Probationary periods' at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/KeyPolicies**

On-going training and development

As part of your regular review meetings, ensure that you explore with your lay employees their on-going training and development needs – this could be formal or informal. These opportunities are vital if a lay employee is going to grow in their skill-set and flourish in their role. Time should be made available as part of their working hours and budget

should be provided by the employing body. The Learning Network offer a range of learning and development opportunities: **methodist.org.uk/LearningNetwork**

Supervision

Reflective Supervision is being rolled out for certain lay roles and more information can be sought from your circuit, usually the Superintendent.

Effective One-to-Ones

How often one-to-ones happen will vary according to how long a person has been in the role and how many hours they work. Usually, at the start of employment an employee will have weekly line-management meetings. This is crucial in helping them find their way in the early stages of their role – investing time early will help in the long run. Generally, they will move to monthly meetings once the person is established in their role, but that does not mean this is the only contact the person has with their line manager. It is also important to consider where the employee is working and how much contact with others they have. If they are working from home, then more regular line-management meetings might ensure they don't feel isolated.

When you begin a new line management relationship it is important to discuss each other's expectations of line management; what do you both want from the line management meetings, what does the organisation require from the meetings. At the heart of this is the question, 'what will our line management culture be?'

Alongside formal meetings, there will often be conversations; some in passing, some via a quick phone call or Zoom chat, or even an email. This is part of a healthy line-management relationship.

Documenting

Documenting formal meetings is essential. This helps both parties keep a record of what was discussed and covered, as well as any action points for each party. It provides a good document to refer to at the next meeting. It is also a way of affirming the employee be capturing things that have gone well – things always seem more concrete when they are written down and helps to provide security in the job role. These records are also vital if the employment relationship becomes challenging and will help provide evidence for appropriate action.

In 2019, research conducted by Totaljobs stated that 49 per cent of employees have left a job because of a poor relationship with their line manager. It is important that managers therefore spend time building an appropriate professional relationship with their employees in a way that engenders trust. Effective one-to-ones are a great way to do this, as well as navigate possible workflow problems.

It is important that these are done right. A consistent time where staff have your undivided attention and where adequate preparation has been undertaken can allow these to succeed.

Kadushin's model of supervision

Kadushin's model of supervision, formed in 1976, is still a really helpful way to frame effective one-to-ones to ensure that we are asking questions that take a holistic approach to the employee's experience. Kudushin's model is in three parts; managerial, supportive and educative. In addition to this, it is good to give time to conversation and reflections about vocation and calling, discussing how the employee understands their work in relation to their faith and serving God.

Managerial

This area looks at the day-to-day function of the role as well as policies and practices. Linking questions to particular objectives can help to ensure that the work that was set out to be achieved is on track, and any possible issues are dealt with. Questions that help to draw out this could include:

- How have you been working towards your objectives recently?
- Are there any things that are hindering you to completing tasks?
- If you reflected on how you have spent your time since our last one-to-one, would you say that you have spent the right time on the right things or would you do anything differently?
- Are there any resource issues? Is your IT equipment functioning? Is your work station set up correctly?

Supportive

This area considers the well-being of the employee and how we can support them from an employer's perspective. We are all affected by the ebbs and flows of life. There may be times where our employees are struggling with grief or navigating personal issues. Although we cannot alleviate their suffering, we can ensure that the working environment does not contribute to any additional stress. Questions that may be useful include:

- How are you finding your workload at the moment? Is it manageable?
- How are you doing in yourself at the moment?
- Is there anything I might need to be aware of from outside of work that may affect your work?
- Is there anything you need additional support in at the moment?

You may find resources such as Mind's **Wellness Action Plan** as a useful tool to help create healthy conversations with your employees about their well-being. The CIPD's '**Supporting Mental Health at Work: Guide for Line Managers**' is also a useful resource.

Educative

This focuses on staff development. We want our staff to train and develop and we need to ensure that we are factoring this into a staff member's objectives for the year. This might not necessarily be training or courses that are linked to an employee's role, but also enabling the staff member to reflect on their own development points or a task they may do differently next time to improve. Questions that may be useful include:

- How would you go about this task different next time?
- What do you need to do to ensure you can do this task to the best of your ability?

- What aspects of your work do you want to develop over the next three/six/twelve months and what do you need to help you to do that?
- Are there any skills or knowledge you want to develop this year and are they are any ways you can develop those ie a course or training?

A great way to continue to develop staff is through the appraisal process – and you can find a helpful video and further resources on this under 'Performance management' at **methodist.org.uk/SupportingLayEmployees**. Another way to help further develop staff is through coaching and mentoring, taking a coaching approach in a line-management setting can help you to ask better questions that help an employee discover their potential. You can find out about coaching and mentoring courses to help you develop this skill under 'Coaching and mentoring' at **methodist.org.uk/SupportingLayEmployees**

Interventions and feedback

There may be times when you need to make a level of intervention in your one-to-ones with your employee. John Heron came up with six categories for interventions that may be helpful to address certain situations that may arise during a one-to-one. You can find these below with some suggestions of what might be useful.

1. Prescriptive

The manager outlines clearly what task needs to be done. This could look like:

- a 'ways of working' document outlining how things should be done
- recording one-to-ones and sending the record to the employee for reference
- creating targets with clear and achievable outcomes so that the employee knows exactly what they should be doing.

2. Informative

This is the passing on of relevant information to the employee. This could look like:

- signposting to relevant material which may help them to do the task
- ensuring that they understand the nuances of a situation which may be derived from your own personal experience working in an area
- explaining how you have found doing that task in your experience ie tips and tricks of the trade.

3. Confronting

This is where you may question the employee's approach to a certain task or behavior. This could look like:

- asking them why they took a certain approach - did it meet the outcomes? If not, why do they think that is? If they do not see the error, it is letting them know what was wrong

- questioning their behavior. 'I have noticed you have been coming in later recently, is there a reason for this?'
- in persistent and more extreme cases, using the disciplinary procedure.

4. Cathartic

This allows the employee to express their emotions or frustrations at a task or system. This should then lead to a constructive solution. This could look like:

- ensuring there is space in one-to-ones to allow employees to express their frustration
- presenting defined options and asking for their initial thoughts and feelings of both options.

5. Catalytic

This is enabling the employee to reflect on their own performance and for them to come up with their own action points, or, to acknowledge where they have done good work. This is different from confronting as it would be used for employees who are self-reflective and can work out what they could do differently with some support. This could look like:

- asking questions that promote reflection in one-to-ones – 'What has worked well in your work?', 'What might you do differently next time?'

6. Supportive

This is about enabling the employee's self-esteem and confidence in performing their role to grow. There may also be a well-being conversation here to establish other supportive interventions to draw on. This could be:

- getting feedback as part of the appraisal process which allows you to acknowledge their great work
- completing a 'Wellness Action Plan' – this can help you have a conversation that brings their emotional and mental well-being into account
- putting in a personal development plan that can build confidence on their existing strengths.

Annual appraisal

The annual appraisal process runs alongside regular one-to-ones. The purpose of one-to-ones isn't just to check an employee's performance against their agreed targets, but to have a more holistic approach to employee's work as discussed above. However, regular one-to-ones are a great way to troubleshoot anything outside of the formal process.

The annual appraisal process formally looks at the employee's targets. There should be one meeting per year that signs off that year's targets, addressing any issues with these, and sets the targets for the following year. There should also be a mid-year review(s) spaced evenly throughout the year to check in and discuss progress towards those targets, offering any necessary support that can help the employee achieve them.

Learning and Development

It is important that lay employees feel supported and equipped in their work. They should be encouraged and enabled to attend communities of practice, on-going training and personal and professional development opportunities. Much of the training in the Methodist Church is free and offered online by the Learning Network, however an annual budget for lay employee training should be agreed before the employee starts which would cover travel costs, resources or residential fees. Time for learning and development also needs to be factored in when calculating the hours needed for the role. Professional development opportunities can help retain staff because they feel valued and invested in. Individuals are able to learn, meet people and share experience which is invaluable to their well-being and should be an integral part of their role.

Key Responsibilities

Legislation

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that an employer must adhere to. As line managers it is important that you model the policies as a result of this legislation. It is also important that you make sure your staff members adhere to this too. This also includes any changes to policies, which should be communicated to you by the employing body. Any time a policy is updated, an employee must be made aware of this change so they can ensure they are compliant with the policy. The Methodist Church website outlines some helpful information about important pieces of legislation, which you can find under 'Employment Legislation' at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the foundation for the well-being, health and safety of employees at work. The employer has a duty of care to ensure that well-being of its employees whenever they are working, not just when they are 'on-site'. This includes when they are working from home. This responsibility extends past risk assessments to an employee's physical and mental well-being in the work place. Line managers must ensure that the following practices are adhered to in line with the legal obligations placed upon the employing body:

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment

It is essential that employers ensure that their staff's work stations are set up correctly. You can find guidance relating to completing a Display Screen Equipment test, as well as other guidance relating to Display Screen Equipment from the Health and Safety Executive: **hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/assessment.htm**

Reasonable adjustments

As a result of the DSE assessment in some circumstances it may be appropriate to make a referral to an Occupational Health Specialist. If your church or circuit do not have dedicated occupational health service, you must take advice from the employee and the employee's doctor if a problem has arisen, ensuring you are clearly putting any guidance into action and taking steps to make any reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments must also be made if someone has declared something about their health or that they have a disability, possibly through a **medical questionnaire** when they are onboarded. Please refer to the guidance information on the Lay Employment website: **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/Recruitment/Step5**

Please note the Equality Act 2010 prohibits employers from asking job applicants questions about their health before offering them employment (with some exceptions). An employer can ask a prospective employee to complete a medical questionnaire to establish an employee's fitness to do particular job, and if needs be, to consider any adjustments. This information can only be obtained after it has made them a job offer and only if it complies with data protection requirements.

Not only is this part of an employer's duty of care, but also a way in which we can create an environment for our staff to flourish and ensure that we are creating a dignified work place. More information on reasonable adjustments and the expectations of employers can be found at **acas.org.uk**

The prevention of illegal working

It is essential that pre employment checks are done prior to new employee start date to confirm their right to work in the UK. By not doing so the employing body is at risk of prosecution. This is covered by the law on preventing illegal working – as set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 (the 2006 Act). For further information regarding best practice in conducting these checks, please go to the Lay Employment website: **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/Recruitment/Step5**

Under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act (2006), the employing body has a legal obligation to:

- check all prospective employees and workers have the right to work in the UK before their first day of work.
- undertake follow-up checks prior to the expiry of right to work for individuals with time-limited leave to enter or stay in the UK.

By carrying out right to work checks, and follow-up checks where required, employers may have a defence against liability for employing a migrant worker illegally. Employers must check specified documents or use the Home Office online right to work service for evidence of an individual's right to work in the UK. (See **gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide** for guidance and a 'Right to work checklist'.)

Failure to check an employee or worker's right to work is a breach of Home Office guidance and could result in a civil penalty if the employing body is found to be employing an illegal worker.

Sickness and Absence

It is recommended that an employing body has a sickness absence and pay policy. Within the policy the employing body would determine whether Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) would apply.

The sickness and absence leave policy must be equitable across all employees by the employing body and should be included within the terms and conditions which will be sent to an employee before employment commences. Employees should be informed of absence and reporting procedures, ideally from day one of their employment as part of their induction to the workplace.

Please note that Statements of Fitness for Work ('fit notes') can be issued by doctors, authorised nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists in general practice and hospital settings. For further information visit: **gov.uk/employers-sick-pay**

For further information, please go to **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/KeyPolicies**

Hybrid Working

Working in a hybrid way, where team members may be working from different locations or even at different times, will require planning and organising if it is to be successful. Exactly how to implement hybrid working will vary across the Church, therefore these new ways of working would need to be tailored to the unique needs of the individual or team.

The role of the line manager will be key to establishing these new ways of working and ensuring that they work in practice. In particular, managers will be responsible for effective communication and team working within newly hybrid teams.

Managing a hybrid team is quite different from managing a team that is either mostly office-based, or mostly remote. It will require a range of new skills and approaches. Some of these tips and techniques can help you to manage in a hybrid environment:

1. Engage your team in establishing your new ways of working. Agreeing these together will help people feel included and that they have an active voice. This should include how to communicate as a team and key principles that everyone can work to.

2. Ensure that you have regular one-to-one time with your team. This is good practice at any time, but when you may not be working in the same place or at the same time as your team, scheduling regular time to keep in touch becomes even more important. These meetings can be online or face-to-face.

3. Talk about well-being with hybrid workers. When people work from home, they may find it difficult to manage the boundaries between work and home, and some people have a tendency to work longer hours. Help people to meaningfully disconnect and

manage their technology and work life balance. Act as a good role model with your own working practices.

4. Be clear on objectives. When people work remotely their performance may be less observable. You will need to be clear with your team how you will assess their performance, and you will need to focus on desired results and outcomes as your main measure for performance. It is always good practice to have well written objectives and provide regular feedback – this is one more area that becomes increasingly important in a hybrid environment.

5. Build in time for social connection. Although many employees do want to retain some element of working from home, most do want to return to their offices for some of the time too and have missed social connection with colleagues. This can include face-to-face meetings but also creating online social spaces for informal conversations and activities.

6. If you are working in a hybrid way yourself, don't forget to be clear with your team about when you are in the office, or when you are working so that your team know how to get in touch with you – and always provide opportunities for employees to speak with you one-to-one.

Flexible Working Requests

A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours that the lay employee works, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some or all of the work from home.

Line managers would normally receive a request in writing by letter or email on standard application form. Upon receiving a flexible working request it is advisable to contact the District Lay Employment Sub Committee or the District's Employment Adviser.

Employing bodies are required by law to consider the matter in a "reasonable manner", which will usually involve holding a meeting with the employee to hear more about the nature of the proposed arrangements and to consider the benefits to both the employee and to the local church/circuit/district/other employing body.

The whole decision process, including any appeal, must be concluded within three months. It is essential that you follow the time limits set out in the employing body's policy on employees requesting flexible working.

On receipt of a request, you will need to arrange a meeting with the employee as soon as possible. There may be circumstances in which the request can be agreed without a meeting, for example if you can see straightaway that the employee's suggestion is easily workable or informal discussions have already taken place. However, you must not reject a request without holding a meeting.

At the meeting with the employee, you should gather as much information as possible on the employee's proposed working arrangements and consider the benefits to both the employee and our organisation. If you are likely to reject the application on one of the eight prescribed grounds, this should be raised and discussed with the employee. Any compromises or alternative solutions can then be explored.

Making your decision

You should consider any request carefully, weighing up the benefits to the employee and organisation against any adverse impact on organisation. You are able to reject the request only on one or more of the eight business reasons, as prescribed in the employer's flexible working policy.

You may ask the employee to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. If you are unable to grant the employee's request, you may suggest a compromise.

For further information please go to **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/KeyPolicies**

Variation of contract

If a request is approved/upheld, the employee must be notified of their new terms and conditions in writing and that these will be a permanent variation to the contract (where the flexible working arrangement is for a trial or temporary period, this will be a temporary variation to the contract). These may either be enclosed within the decision letter or otherwise communicated to the employee as soon as possible thereafter. For further information please go to 'Variations to Contracts' at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/KeyPolicies**

Facing Challenges

There are number of potential challenges that may come to your attention which may affect your team including but not limited to addressing poor performance, mental and physical well-being concerns, and bullying and harassment complaints. If you encounter any difficulties either in your work or personal life, please be aware that there is support available to you.

You may contact your Lay Employment Sub Committee/Secretary for help, as well as the superintendent. You may also find some useful information under 'Employee Relations' at **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/KeyPolicies**

Poor performance

There may be times when you need to manage someone who is not performing to the required standard, and you need to be able to give honest, timely feedback – even where it may feel unpleasant or challenging. Having this sort of difficult conversation is a fundamental part of the role of line manager, and it is essential that you do not allow a situation to develop where an individual is unaware of their poor performance. Not only will this lead them to assume that they are working to an acceptable standard, but it will also be unfair to the remaining members of the team and potentially have a negative effect on morale and engagement, and ultimately performance.

Therefore, it is essential to address any poor performance as soon as you become aware of it, and set clear objectives and expectations for improvement. Although in many cases it will be possible to resolve the issue through informal advice and support be aware that there may be times when you need to escalate the performance issues and commence a formal performance improvement procedure.

Grievances

A grievance is a concern, problem or complaint raised by an employee that relates to some aspect of their work, such as the terms and conditions, working environment, duties or work relations.

An employing body is required by law to set out in the statement of the terms and conditions that it issues to employees how and to whom they should raise a grievance.

In many cases it will be possible for complaints to be resolved informally through discussions between the employee and their line manager. However, where an informal resolution is not possible or appropriate, the employee should be able to pursue the matter under the formal grievance procedure.

It is important to follow the employer's grievance procedure, or if the employer hasn't got one the **ACAS guidance on disciplinary and grievance procedures**, which allows an opportunity for the early resolution of the issues raised by the employee before they escalate and potentially lead to the breakdown of the employment relationship and potentially costly tribunal claim.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination

Within the Methodist Church, employing bodies should have their own anti-bullying and harassment policy, including provision of a framework for ensuring that complaints of bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly, fairly, confidentially and sensitively. This would include signposting to relevant complaints, whistleblowing or grievance policies so if inappropriate behaviour occurs, individuals know where they are able to report it.

The contractual provisions applying to lay employees should normally specify how matters of concern can be addressed in procedural terms. The employing body's bullying and harassment policy should define acts of bullying and harassment to make it clear what is considered as unacceptable behaviour. This can range from unwanted physical contact or verbal abuse to isolation and exclusion from work-related social activities or unreasonable work-related instructions.

A bullying and harassment policy often gives employees the choice of a formal or an informal route. The informal route normally involves making it clear to the perpetrator that the behaviour offends and that the employee wants it to stop. This could be done by letter or e-mail if a face-to-face confrontation is too difficult in the first instance. However, the employee should also have the choice of the formal route, which is likely to involve setting out details of the complaint in writing with specifics as to dates and times and an account of what the bullying or harassment is alleged to consist of. The complaint should then be investigated by the employer as promptly as possible.

The Methodist Church has training and resources in place to encourage positive working together: **methodist.org.uk/PWT**

Some Districts are part of a pilot reconciliation scheme. Find more info here: **methodist.org.uk/Guidance/Reconciliation**

Ending Employment

Exit interviews are a good opportunity to learn and improve:

- job description and duties
- working conditions and terms and conditions
- relationships with line manager and colleagues
- communication
- training and development
- work/life balance.

As questions are asked about the line manager, the exit interview should be undertaken by someone other than the line manager. There is lots of useful information about endings at **methodist.org.uk/for-churches/equipping-circuits/endings**

For essential information related to ending the employment relationship, visit **methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment/KeyPolicies**

MCLMHB24

Feedback, corrections, amendments or suggestions for this guide are welcome to mvw@methodistchurch.org.uk

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