PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS FOR STATIONING MATCHING OF PRESBYTERS 2025-2026

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A. OVERALL PRINCIPLES AGREED BY THE STATIONING COMMITTEE

1. Stationing matching is a process in which we are attempting to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to the circuits and presbyters. The responsibility for the stationing of presbyters remains with the Conference through the annual adoption of the stations.

2. The Stationing Matching Group (SMG) consists of the Chairs of District (DC), the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO), the Deputy Warden who is a member of the Diaconal Stationing Sub Committee (DSSC), the Chair of SMG, who is nominated by the group and appointed by the Stationing Committee (SC), together with the Chair of the SC and designated members of the Connexional Team (currently the Assistant Secretary of Conference (ASC) and the Ministerial Co-ordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries (MCOOM)). In the event that a DC is indisposed and unable to attend SMG, the Lay Stationing Representative (LSR) will attend in their capacity as the designated deputy for all matters to do with stationing in the districts.

   All designated DCs are expected to attend SMG, as observers to the proceedings during their 'shadow' year as part of their induction to the role.

   LSRs are invited to SMG meetings on a rotational basis as observers to equip them with the necessary experience and understanding of the process, should they be required to deputise for their DC.

   Observers will not speak or be invited to express an opinion and will be required to withdraw during conversations for which there may be a conflict of interest. They will be encouraged to offer feedback to the meeting following the conclusion of the meeting.

   Where designated Chairs and a designated Warden of the Diaconal Order have shadowed the matching process, an opportunity will be made for them to meet with the Chair of the Matching Group and the Chair of the Stationing Committee to discuss any matters arising from the process. This opportunity could take place within the normal induction training programme.

3. The SMG is responsible for the matching of all presbyteral appointments within the control of the Methodist Church except:

   a) those entering into their first appointment in the Methodist Church in Britain as probationer ministers, who will be dealt with by the Initial Stationing Sub-Committee (ISSC);

   b) those being either designated ordained probationer presbyters, or having been accepted for transfer into Full Connexion with the Methodist Church in Britain from another conference or church, or to serve for a fixed period of time as a Recognised and Regarded minister, who will be dealt with through the ISSC;

   c) District Chairs, the Secretary of Conference and Assistant Secretary of Conference who will be nominated via other processes

   d) where an appointment is open to applications from either a lay or ordained person, it may be advertised. Presbyters require permission from the Stationing Advisory Committee (SAC) before accepting such an appointment and if part way through a current invitation, would also need to seek a curtailment (SO544) of the appointment in which they currently serve;

   e) where SC has granted permission for a presbyteral appointment to be advertised. This is only granted in rare and specific situations and is assessed by way of a Reasoned Statement, setting out the reasons for advertising, by SC. This process should normally be initiated prior to commencement of stationing matching in November. Presbyters require permission from the SAC before accepting such an appointment and, if part way through a current invitation, would also need to seek a curtailment (SO544) of the appointment in which they currently serve.

4. The process of matching presbyters to appointments is a connexional process, which operates within a framework of consistency and transparency, between the members of the SMG. The

process seeks to ensure that all presbyters are treated equally and fairly, with the intention of proposing matches where both presbyters and circuits can flourish in ministry.

5. If at any point during the matching process or initial stationing process a Chair considers that an issue has arisen which involves pastoral sensitivity or confidentiality, they should indicate this to the meeting. From time to time, information either about a circuit or a presbyter may need to be shared between Chairs. Where this is the case, a Chair-to-Chair conversation will take place outside of the meeting, with (if appropriate), a member of the Connexional Team present, before the match can be made. Following this, and where appropriate, the SMG will be made aware of the particular circumstances in confidence, prior to agreeing to a match.

6. The Methodist Church believes that discrimination in any form cannot be tolerated and will seek to eliminate this. All members of circuit Invitation committees involved in stationing are required to have undertaken training in Unconscious Bias using the training package that has been prepared by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee as part of the EDI toolkit for this specific purpose, on behalf of the Methodist Church (see Introduction to Unconscious Bias – for church councils, circuit meetings and other groups - The Methodist Church.

7. On an occasion where the Church identifies instances of discrimination, it will robustly address the issue and make any required changes necessary to reduce or eradicate any further instances, whilst also ensuring compliance with the Equalities Act (2010). Furthermore, where necessary the Church will enhance systems and processes to reduce the likelihood of further incidents. The Methodist Church actively encourages all presbyters, deacons and lay members to challenge any instance of inappropriate behaviour or discrimination, in the first instance to their DC.

   Where a concern or suggestion is raised that an appointment might have become the subject of any form of discrimination, the matter will be referred to the SC, or to the SMG (if it is in session), or to the Initial Stationing Sub-Committees (ISSC) as appropriate by the DC who should provide the Chairs of the Stationing Matching Group and Stationing Committee with a written report in advance of the meetings. After hearing the evidence and satisfying itself as to the details, the relevant committee will make a decision about whether the appointment can reasonably be included in the stationing matching process. If it is found that any form of discrimination has influenced views or opinions of any person involved in the process, the decision for exclusion (if necessary) in matching, will be taken by the SC.

   Following a visit by a presbyter to a circuit, where the match has been formally declined by either party, the chair of the CIC must complete the Circuit Report Form (S5) and the presbyter must complete the Presbyter Report Form (S6). These must be forwarded on to the chairs of SC & SMG by the DC who will review the forms for any possible discrimination and also make a general anonymised report to the next meeting of the SMG so that wider learning can take place.

   The Chair or LSR representing the circuit, and that representing the presbyter will seek to have a conversation with the party they represent, in advance of the next SMG meeting, discussing the content of the feedback form (which remains confidential to the process), and will only be used to assist future stationing matching.

8. In the case of presbyters, once a match has been formally declined following a visit, the Stationing Matching Group will not normally reconsider the same match during the current round of stationing. If, however, the members of the Matching Group consider that a re-match might be appropriate then the matter should be referred to a reference group consisting of the Chair of the Stationing Committee, the Chair of the Stationing Matching Group, a member of the Connexional Team and the Chairs representing both the circuit and the presbyter.

B. PREPARATION FOR STATIONING MATCHING

1. A Code of Practice is agreed by the Stationing Committee each year and is made available on the Methodist Church website. Chairs of District and Lay Stationing Reps should ensure that all presbyters and circuit stewards involved in the stationing process have access to it and have awareness of its contents (see Stationing forms and guidelines - The Methodist Church).

2. Where the station being considered involves a Local Ecumenical Partnership the District Chair and the appropriate Ecumenical Officer must be consulted about the appropriate procedures.

3. In the period May to July all those who are involved in the stationing process for the coming connexional year must be fully briefed. This will usually be achieved through a meeting in the districts. The meeting will include presbyters, members of their households, circuit stewards, church stewards and circuit Superintendents. At the briefing meetings, ministers should be reminded that ministry in the Methodist Church is itinerant. (See Itinerancy - The Methodist Church).

   DCs and LSRs are asked to encourage presbyters to consider prayerfully whether they have a call to ministry in one of the island districts or in a circuit where there is considerable work in another language (i.e. in the Wales Synod Cymru District or e.g. with Korean or Chinese congregations).

4. The names of any presbyters and deacons in the process who are married or in civil partnerships or committed relationship to another presbyter and/or deacon will be forwarded to the Chair of SMG and declared to SMG1 at the start of its business.

   If the couple enters the stationing process in the same year every effort will be made to find suitable appointments for them both, but the Church cannot guarantee this. Where the couple are both ordained presbyters there should be a conversation with the District Chair to discuss the prioritization of their appointments in the context of the needs of the Church. Where an ordained presbyter and ordained deacon are married to each other this discussion will also establish which matching route is to be followed first i.e. that of diaconal or presbyteral matching. The outcome of these conversations should be recorded in writing.

   When consideration is given to matching one member of the partnership, the needs of the other will be considered at the same time. Please note that while SO 803(2) identifies that in the above situations, ministers married to one another have the right to choose which of any available manses they will occupy, this SO does limit their choice to one manse for both parties if appointed to the same circuit or nearby circuits.

   Where an ordained presbyter or deacon is married to a probationer presbyter and both are to be stationed, the probationer's appointment will take precedence. The DC should invite the couple to have a conversation about the implications of this for the ordained minister and the possibility of both being in stationing in the same year.

   Probationer deacons and presbyters are informed of their appointments in January. The matching of the ordained partner will take place after this, normally at SAG1.

5. All stipendiary appointments, whether full or part time must go through the matching process. Non-stipendiary appointments (whether or not they require the minister to live in a manse) which consist of more than three days a week / 6 sessions are dealt with through the matching process. Non-stipendiary appointments (whether or not they require the minister to live in a manse) which consist of less than three days a week and Sundays pro rata, are to be listed in the profile book. (See Appendix 3)

6. The DC will ensure that each presbyter and circuit who are in the process have access to the relevant profile forms (which are on the website) and will offer to arrange individual meetings with presbyters and with circuit stewards where a vacancy is to occur. The LSR will usually be

involved in these meetings. It is good practice for notes to be taken at such meetings and agreed by all parties present.

7. Presbyteral and circuit profiles must be completed and returned to the DC and LSR and thence to Stationing Administration (stationingadministration@methodistchurch.org.uk) by the dates shown in the Code of Practice. Profiles should be typed and should not extend over more than two sides of A4 using Arial minimum font 10. They must be sent electronically to Stationing Administration.

8. Following publication of the profiles, presbyters and circuit stewards must discuss with their DC and LSR, at face to face (or video conference) meetings, their responses to the profiles which they have received and especially those stations and presbyters respectively which they think could be possible matches for them and why. These inform the process and are indicative of the type of appointment in which the presbyter believes they will flourish and the kind of minister the circuit stewards believe will enable the mission and ministry of their circuit to flourish. Presbyters and Circuits should also discuss with their Chair any appointments with which they feel a match would be inappropriate. It is good practice for notes to be taken and agreed by all parties present.

   DCs and LSRs are encouraged to explore as many profiles as possible with presbyters and circuit stewards so that there is a good understanding of what presbyters and circuits are looking for and DCs can be confident about speaking about why matches that might be proposed by the Matching Group would or would not be good fits.

   During these meetings, presbyters should be asked to identify an indicative list of up to 5 appointments, which will be included in the lists provided for SMG and conversation had about what skills and experience they bring and any areas of training that might be needed if matched to them.

   Circuit stewards will be asked to identify an indicative list of up to 5 presbyters to be displayed at SMG in alphabetical order.

   It is important that any factors, which have not been included in the written profiles because of the confidential or sensitive nature of them, are discussed at these meetings so that the DC is aware of them and there can be conversation about what might need to be shared at SMG. It is good practice to agree a written record of these discussions.

   It is also important that if the minister or any members of the household live with disabilities which might impact on visits or suitability of manses this is shared with the DC and conversation is had about what adaptations might facilitate a good visit and appropriate living accommodation. It is good practice for notes to be taken and agreed by all parties present.

9. Indicative lists of presbyters and circuits must be sent to Stationing Administration by 9:00 on the Wednesday before SMG begins and ideally sooner

10. There should be no communication between presbyters and receiving circuits and vice versa, or advocacy on behalf of either party, at this stage of the process. Should any such communication be shown to have taken place, then a match will not be made. The details of such communication must be reported to the Chair of SMG and Chair of SC and details and evidence presented to the Stationing Matching Group.

    It is, however, permissible for presbyters to access a circuit website.

11. Where there is additional information about a circuit or presbyter which cannot be included on the profile but which needs to be known to either inform matching or by any circuit/presbyter matched the DC should prepare an additional confidential note, which can be forwarded as appropriate to the circuit or presbyter who has been matched prior to any visit taking place.

12. The ASC should ensure that each presbyter who has submitted a profile has an up-to-date DBS check or current PVG and where relevant has the recommendation for their R and R status to be extended or to transfer into Full Connexion, and permission to live in their own home.

Regional Stationing Groups (RSG)

13. Membership of the Regional Stationing Group (RSG) includes the DCs and LSRs from each district represented in the regional group. The group will nominate a Chair to convene as a minimum, a face to face (or video conferencing) meeting of all members of this group once all profiles have been submitted to the Connexional Stationing Administrator, allowing sufficient time to consider each presbyter profile, and the status of each circuit appointment profile submitted.

14. Regional Stationing Groups should meet before the 27th September. At the RSG, the situation of each of the circuits seeking a match will be discussed robustly and challenged as necessary with a view to discerning which, if any, of the appointments are less challenging than those which could be accepted for initial MOCC stationing and test them against the agreed criteria (at least 150 members and opportunity for the development of mission). Where a profile indicates the appointment has less members but includes more creative possibilities for ministry, significant chaplaincy or Superintendency or there are exceptional reasons why a circuit needs to submit a profile, the RSG should consider any reasoned statement for inclusion which has been produced by the circuit for why it should be considered as a full-time appointment for matching with an ordained presbyter in 2024-2025 and either agree that the profile be withdrawn from stationing matching and reshaped as a part-time or probationer appointment or intentionally held vacant OR agree their own reasoned statement as to why this cannot happen and why it is necessary for the appointment to be included in its current form. This statement will be forwarded to the Scrutiny Group for consideration as to whether the profile can be included for matching at SMG. Such statements should not be longer than one side of A4 and might include any implications for remaining circuit staff or for the district.

15. The names of any presbyters and deacons in the process who are married or in civil partnerships or committed relationship to another presbyter and/or deacon should be forwarded to the Chair of SMG by the DC and will be declared to SMG1 at the start of its business.

16. RSGs should discuss any presbyters with very limited deployability ('limited deployability' is defined in the matching process as those presbyters who might only be available to match to one or two appointments in the current stationing rounds), or other 'special cases'. ('Special cases' include situations where ministers may be returning after a period of ill health or recuperative leave, where members of SMG are returning to Circuit ministry, or such other situations involving unusual or exceptional circumstances which might mean consideration needs to be given as to how the protocols for matching need to be adapted).

    Only "special cases" (including limited deployability) agreed in the Regional Stationing Group meeting can be considered by the SMG and these should be submitted to the Chair of the SMG and the Chair of the SC, together with a reasoned statement of the need. The Chairs of the SMG and the SC will decide whether or not the special case submission will be accepted and how protocols could be adapted. Where the request is declined reasons will be given and if the DC or the RSG wishes to contest the decision the matter will be submitted to SMG1 for a final decision. The special needs will not be the only factors determining a match

    If agreed within the RSG, once the profiles are available, contact can be made between relevant District Chairs to ensure that the DCs are aware of presbyters with limited deployability who need to be in that particular District/Region. Such contact is for information purposes only and not the testing out of possibilities.

17. The Regional Stationing Groups should also consider if there are exceptional circumstances which would mean an appointment should be considered in a round 0 at the beginning of SMG because a circuit has unexpectedly lost a presbyter as a result of the stationing process in the

current connexional year, or where a profile has been submitted as the result of the death of minister, or where a circuit has carried a vacancy for two years or more and the needs are now acute. Such requests should be forwarded to the Chair of the Matching Group and Chair of the Stationing Committee.

18. In principle, the DC and LSR will agree with others within the District as appropriate, the order of calls of appointments during SMGs.

The Scrutiny Group (SG)

19. This group is appointed annually at the SC meeting in March/April.

20. The group will be formed of the Chair of SMG, the Chair of SC, and one of the two designated members of the Connexional Team who will serve for the duration of their appointment. Additionally, a former LSR who has served on the SC within the previous five years and a former DC who has served in this capacity within the previous five years will serve on the SG initially for three years. It will be chaired by the former DC.

21. In carrying out its work, the SG will have before them all the circuit profiles and the reasoned statements forwarded from Regional Groups.

22. The SG will review all appointments to agree that they meet the requirement that they are no less challenging than those, which can be accepted for Initial MOCC Stationing (150 members with opportunities for the development of mission).

23 In the case of appointments, which do not meet the criteria above, the group will consider the reasoned statements provided by the regional stationing groups and decide whether or not the profile can be included in stationing matching.

24 A report will be made to SMG on those appointments identified as not meeting the criteria in 22. if they have not been reshaped.

New and revised profiles

25. If it comes to light that a profile is inaccurate or there has been a change of circumstance since the profile was submitted, the Chairs of SMG and SC should be alerted at the earliest opportunity and a revised profile sent to them. The Chair of SMG will forward the profile to Stationing Administration who will circulate it.

    If a circuit or presbyter wish to change their profile after it has been circulated this can only be done via a written request to the Chairs of SMG and SC who will consider it and will notify Stationing Administration of the outcome of the request.

    If approval of a change is granted, the new or amended profile will be circulated to all members of SMG, DCs, LSRs, shadow chairs and to presbyters and circuits seeking a match, by Stationing Administration.

    Details of any change to a manse must also be circulated in the same way.

26. If a presbyter or circuit needs to enter the stationing process after the deadline for submission of forms has passed the DC should forward their profile to the Chairs of SMG and SC with a reason for why it is being submitted after the deadline.

    If the profile is accepted, the Chair of SMG will forward the profile to Stationing Administration who will circulate it to members of SMG, DCs, LSRs, and shadow chairs. The DC or LSR is responsible for circulating it to presbyters and circuits seeking a match.

    If the profile is submitted as the result of a curtailment, it will not be circulated until the signed curtailment paperwork has been sent to the ASC.

27 Any new profiles submitted less than a week before the next round of SMG or SAG will not be considered at that meeting as it will not have been possible to complete the necessary checks in time for circulation to those who need to see the profile to reflect on whether it might be a possible match or not.

Immediately prior to each meeting of the SMG

28. Presbyters should be asked to identify an indicative list of up to five appointments of which up to that will be included in the lists provided for SMG.

    Circuit stewards will be asked to identify an indicative list of up to five presbyters to be displayed at SMG in alphabetical order.

29. Indicative lists of presbyters and circuits must be sent to Stationing Administration (stationingadministration@methodistchurch.org.uk) by 9am on the Wednesday before SMG begins and ideally sooner.

30.. District Chairs and Lay Stationing Representatives should inform the Chairs of SMG and SC of the names of any presbyters who are not available for stationing at that meeting, together with the reasons why.

C. MEETINGS OF THE STATIONING MATCHING GROUP

1. All conversations and decisions about stationing are underpinned by prayer and a commitment to openness and transparency.

2. The two meetings of the Stationing Matching Group are referred to as SMG1 and 2. Dates for these meetings are included in the Code of Practice.

3. The process is designed to match presbyters to appointments. However, towards the end of the matching process any member of the group or the Chair of SMG may suggest that the meeting should begin to match appointments to presbyters. This suggestion must be agreed by the meeting before it is implemented.

4. A Reference Group is to be appointed at the beginning of SMG, which will support the SMG throughout its work at times where it is deemed helpful. This will consist of the Chair of SMG (who will chair the Reference Group), the Chair of SC, a representative of the Connexional Team (present at SMG), and at least one District Chair. The Reference Group must reflect the diversity of the SMG. This is not intended to replace the 'Chair to Chair' conversations, but rather to support fairness in the approach for both circuits and ministers in the matching process.

5. Members of the SMG must declare any personal interest prior to, or at an appropriate point during a matching meeting, for example in any situation where a member of the family of a matching group member is under discussion, the member should leave the meeting. Observers (including designated Chairs and LSR observers) do not speak at SMG and follow the same protocol.

6. No presbyter will be matched unless a profile has been submitted (see the sole exception to this rule in paragraph 10. below).

7. District calls will be distributed through the rounds at SMG according to the total number of appointments in each District.

8. When an appointment is called every reasonable effort is made to match a presbyter to the appointment before moving on to the next call. When the meeting agrees to put the appointment to one side, the DC calling the appointment may substitute the proposed appointment with another appointment waiting to be filled.

9. In any situation of disagreement between the members of the matching group about a particular match the issue will be put to the meeting and voted upon.

10. If any of the superintendency appointments (or exceptionally and with the approval of SMG non-superintendency appointments) remain unmatched and no presbyter currently in Stationing can be identified, the Chair of the SMG may ask Chairs to consider any suitable presbyters currently serving in their Districts and bring the names to SMG2. From SMG 2 onwards a similar request may be made during the meeting and names can be considered within that meeting of SMG. In considering possibilities the Chair must also consider any potential impact on the presbyter's circuit or other appointment as there can be no guarantee that a vacancy could be filled through stationing matching in the current connexional year.

    The name of the presbyters concerned must be made known to the meeting before any contact is made to ascertain the willingness of a presbyter to move early. Should the presbyter be willing, a match can be made but they should be asked to prepare a profile which will be sent through the DC to the Chairs of SMG and SC who will then give permission for a visit to be made. No visit should be made until a profile has been received (see Sections F and G).

    The same process will be followed if it is suggested a presbyter be moved unexpectedly from an appointment throughout Stationing Matching.

    If the presbyter is currently a member of the Connexional Team, no approach shall be made to them before the Chair has spoken to the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of Conference.

11. Where every attempt has been made to match a presbyter offering to serve in a full-time appointment without success, the SMG may suggest to the DC representing the appointment that a conversation be held with the circuit with a view to reshaping the appointment to allow the possibility of a match with a presbyter seeking a part-time appointment. The SMG will ask for a new profile to be submitted to the Chairs of SMG & SC for approval before the match can be confirmed. The presbyter will be sent the new profile and be fully briefed about the changes made, before a visit takes place. The revised profile and the outcome of a match in this situation will be reported to the next round of SMG. This will not normally happen at SMG1.

12. Indicative lists for presbyters and circuits (see reference above) will be sent out by Stationing Administration the morning of each meeting of the SMG and where SMG meets in person these lists will be displayed around the room.

13. At SMG1, following opening devotions, the matching group will agree the timetable for the meeting, including any further meetings of RSGs and any relaxation time. SMG will then appoint the Reference Group.

14. SMG will agree the names of any presbyters not available for matching, special case circuits and special case presbyters (these will have already been agreed with the Chair of the Matching Group). The names of any presbyters and deacons in the process who are married or in civil partnerships or committed relationship to another presbyter or deacon will be listed.

15. A list of those presbyters having been identified as having limited deployability will then be agreed along with the appointments that may be suitable for them but there will be no discussion of the list of suitable appointments at this stage. The principles of transparency and fairness demand that there should be no advantage or disadvantage in the matching process for ministers with very limited deployability or for couples in stationing.

    When the appointment is called in the stationing rounds the names of those with limited deployability will be highlighted together with reasons identified by the RSG why they should be matched to the appointment, alongside any other presbyters who are to be considered for the appointment.

16. Time will be built into the programme ar each SMG for meetings of Regional Stationing Groups, if necessary.

17. A time for discussion of issues arising from the matching process will be made available at the end of SMG2.

18. Business matters will not intrude into the matching process.

Determining the order of calls in the matching rounds

19. The Chair of the Stationing Matching Group, prior to SMG1, and 2 will reflect upon the distribution of appointments throughout the Connexion and will draw up the schedule of rounds so as to ensure a fair distribution for each district. The schedule of rounds will be agreed at the commencement of each Stationing Matching Group meeting.

20. In the opening rounds of presbyteral stationing the order of calls will be determined by a random draw. In later rounds the order will be proposed by the Chairs of the Stationing Matching Group and the Stationing Committee and put to the meeting for its approval.

21. In SMG1, there will be an all-in round at round 2. Each district will only have one call in this round. There will be no all-in round in SMG2.

22. All appointments identified for presbyters with limited deployability if not already matched should be matched in round 3.

23. There may be a case for a round 0 at the beginning of any of the Stationing Matching Group meetings. This could be where a circuit has unexpectedly lost a presbyter as a result of the stationing process in the current connexional year, or where a profile has been submitted as the result of the death of minister, or where a circuit has carried a vacancy for two years or more and the needs are now acute. A round 0 would be agreed by the whole group at the request of one of the RSGs or the Stationing Committee.

24. In SMG1 and SMG2 there will be a time of reflection upon the matches made in that meeting. Matching may be reconsidered if any member of the meeting requests such a reconsideration.

Relaxation time

25. Protected time for relaxation will be built into the process as follows:

    a) There will be no matching after dinner on the Tuesday evening of SMG1;

    b) on the Wednesday afternoon of SMG1, the session should begin at 16:00 instead of immediately after lunch.

Following the matching group meeting

26. Following a time agreed by the meeting, each Chair will notify each presbyter and circuit for whom a match has been made to expect to receive or to make a telephone call as soon as possible after 9:00 the following morning in order to arrange a mutually convenient day for a visit to the circuit.

27. Where a presbyter refuses to visit a circuit with which they have been matched, following a conversation between the presbyter and their DC, resolution will be sought through conversation between the DC, the Chair of the SMG and the Chair of the SC within 48 hours. A short report offering an assessment of the circumstances will be made to the following meeting of the matching group.

28. If this independent assessment determines that there is no reason for a visit not to be made but the presbyter refuses to do so, the Secretary of the Conference will write to the presbyter reminding them of their obligations under our discipline and warning them that further refusal will

normally result in their going Without Appointment at their own expense under the provisions of SO 774(9). The presbyter will normally be required to attend the Unmatched Ministers' Group meeting in June in order to account for and explore with the group their failure to observe our discipline.

29. Where a circuit refuses to meet with a presbyter who has been matched, following a conversation between the circuit stewards and the DC, resolution will be sought through conversation between the DC, the Chair of the SMG and the Chair of the SC within 48 hours. A short report offering an assessment of the circumstances will be made to the following meeting of the matching group

30. If this independent assessment determines there is no reason for a visit not to be made but the circuit continues to refuse, the Secretary of the Conference will write to the circuit reminding them of their obligations under our discipline and warning them that further refusal will normally result in no further match being made.

31. Visits should be made within the timeframe given in the Code of Practice and District Chairs and Lay Stationing Reps should make themselves available for conversations following visits to enable careful and prayerful reflection by presbyters and circuits.

32. The District Chair of both presbyter and circuit should report the outcome of the visit to Stationing Administration. Where the match has been declined, they should indicate whether the match was declined by the presbyter or circuit or both.

33. Where a match has been declined, the circuit and presbyter must both complete the relevant form and the Chair should forward it to the Chairs of the Stationing Matching Group and the Stationing Committee within seven days.

Withdrawal of profiles

34. Where a request for the withdrawal of a circuit or presbyteral profile is made then this should be accompanied by a written reasoned statement. Prior to the close of SMG2 requests must be submitted to the Chair of the SMG and the Chair of the SC and, in the case of circuits, will only normally be accepted if it is to be withdrawn so that a profile for a diaconal appointment, or a profile for someone entering into their first appointment can be submitted. Following the close of SMG2 the Convener of the SAG should also be included.

    Where withdrawal is to allow a district or circuit to make alternative arrangements then permission will only be granted by the SAG following a date determined on an annual basis by the Stationing Committee (31 March 2026), and subject to there being a sufficient number and variety of appointments remaining for matches which might still be made. This will also apply to requests concerning Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

    Withdrawn profiles cannot normally be re-submitted in the same year. The only exceptions are where permission has been granted for it to be withdrawn to be reshaped for a probationer, MOCC or deacon and the relevant sub-committee has indicated no match is possible.

    From a second date to be announced each year (e.g. 4 June 2026), a circuit profile may be withdrawn with the consent of the Convener of the SAG and without a reasoned statement, provided that a sufficient number and variety of appointments remain for matches which might still be made.

35. From the date referred to in 34. above and following the agreed withdrawal of a profile, a circuit where no agreed match has been possible may make alternative arrangements, with the agreement of the DC, for the provision of ministry for the following connexional year.

D. DIACONAL APPOINTMENTS

1. The stationing of deacons is the responsibility of the Warden of the Diaconal Order, with the advice of the Diaconal Stationing Sub-Committee (DSSC).

2. The decisions of the Diaconal Stationing Sub-Committee will be reported to the Stationing Matching Group at an appropriate point agreed by the Warden and Chair of the Stationing Matching Group, which will be at SMG2 in 2026.

E. THE STATIONING ACTION GROUP

1. The Stationing Action Group (SAG) continues the process of stationing after the second phase has been completed, normally beginning in February each year and working through Zoom or telephone conferences. Membership of the group comprises a Convener appointed by the SC, a representative from each RSG, the MCOOM, a representative of the Conference Office, the Warden of the MDO, the Chair of the SMG and the Chair of the SC. This Group is appointed by the Stationing Committee.

2. If, despite successive matches and extensive consultation, it is considered by SAG that it is not possible to match a presbyter for the coming year, the Convener of the SAG must consult with the Secretary of the Conference or her/his representative so that the presbyter can be referred to the Unmatched Ministers' Meeting in June.

3. Presbyteral stationing matters arising between the end of the Methodist Conference and the beginning of the next year's stationing cycle shall be the responsibility, under the direction of the President, of the Convener of the Stationing Action Group. The beginning of the next year's cycle for such purposes will be the start of the first meeting of the Stationing Matching Group.

F. PROTOCOL WHERE A NAME OF A PRESBYTER WHO IS NOT IN STATIONING IS OFFERED FOR CONSIDERATION ABOUT MOVING EARLY

1. If it is clear after SMG1 has met that there continue to be appointments which need to be filled, Chairs and lay stationing reps may have general conversations with ministers, especially those in the penultimate year of their current period of invitation, about their circumstances and whether they might be open to moving early.

2. If, at SMG2 or any later phase of stationing there can be no match with ministers who are currently available for stationing then a Chair may suggest the names of any presbyters whom they consider to be a match for a particular appointment.

3. The name of the presbyter (s) concerned must be made known to the meeting of SMG or SAG before any contact is made to ascertain the willingness of a presbyter to move early to a particular appointment. SMG or SAG will decide whether a match should be considered and will authorize contact with the presbyter about the particular match. Should the presbyter be willing, a match can be made but they should be asked to prepare a profile which will be sent through the District Chair to the Chair of the Stationing Committee and the Chair of SMG or SAG, as appropriate who will then give permission for a visit to be made.

4. The Chair of SMG or SAG should also forward the name to the ASC and to the Connexional Safeguarding Officer who will ensure that the Chair of SC and Chair of SMG or SAG are aware of any relevant issues which might affect the potential match, before giving permission for a visit.

5. If the presbyter concerned is seeking any permissions e.g. to return to the active work, to reside in their own home, or to return to circuit ministry, these should normally be sought prior to a visit being made.

6. Careful thought must always be given to the implications for the circuit or other context in which the presbyter is currently serving. If the presbyter is currently serving as a member of the Connexional Team, the Chair must speak with the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of Conference before approaching the minister and be prepared to share with SMG or SAG any concerns expressed about a proposed early move.

7. If a presbyter might be suitable and able to serve in more than one appointment then SMG must hear the name of the presbyter concerned, together with brief details and listen to all expressions of interest before proposing where a match should be considered.

G. PROTOCOL WHERE A PRESBYTER WHO IS INTENDING TO REQUEST PERMISSION TO BECOME SUPERNUMERARY OFFERS TO CONTINUE IN ACTIVE MINISTRY IN RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF THE CONNEXION

1. Their profile must be circulated to SMG or SAG as appropriate for consideration against the available appointments, even if their deployability is extremely limited. If they are offering more than 0.49, they will be expected to live in a manse unless permission has been given to live in their own home.

APPENDIX 1

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN A MEMBER OF THE STATIONING MATCHING GROUP IS TO BE STATIONED.

Introduction

From time to time a member of the Stationing Matching Group is to be stationed in a circuit appointment. Where this is the case it is important that the presbyter (usually a Chair of District) concerned is able to take a full part in the stationing process and represent the ministers and circuits which are their responsibility without distraction or prejudice. It is also important that the process is fully transparent and as fair as possible. In order to ensure that SMG can function smoothly the matching of a member of SMG (the returning member) is normally made in advance of other matches. In all other respects the process is the same as the process for all other presbyters.

It is expected that the District Lay Stationing Representative will be fully involved in all aspects of stationing. When a Chair of District is or may be entering into stationing it is vital that the Lay Stationing Representative is involved in all conversations about stationing so that they are fully equipped to deputise in the case of a potential conflict of interest that cannot be resolved in a way that is seen to be transparent and fair.

The member of SMG to be stationed shall advise the Secretary of Conference, the Chair of SMG and the Chair of Stationing Committee as soon as they are aware that they will, or may be, in stationing in a given connexional year so that any potential conflict of interest can be addressed at the earliest opportunity and the Regional Stationing Group is convened to appoint a Chair to represent them.

The process

1. A Chair of District in the returning SMG member's Regional Stationing Group is designated to deal with the matching process. This designation is made by the RSG and is approved by the Stationing Committee. A presbyter returning to stationing will be represented by their District Chair. (This is likely only to happen if the Chair of SMG is a serving presbyter.)

2. A sub-group is set up by the Stationing Committee to deal with the appointment. The membership of the sub-group will normally be agreed at the March meeting of the Stationing Committee prior to entering the stationing process following the Conference. If a need arises later in the year the membership will be agreed by the Stationing Committee where possible or exceptionally, by the Chair of the Stationing Committee, the Chair of SMG and the Assistant Secretary of the Conference. The sub-group will include the Chair of the SMG, the Chair of the Stationing Committee, the representing Chair nominated by the RSG and a Lay stationing Representative. The appointment of the sub-group and its subsequent decision-making processes are facilitated by the Chair of the SMG.

3. The returning SMG member discusses their hopes and aspirations and gifts and graces with their representing Chair and prepares a profile in the normal way. This should be prepared in time to be available to the sub-group early in September before the deadline for the receipt of Circuit Profiles.

4. This profile is circulated to the Chairs of Districts and Lay Stationing Reps taking account of any important geographical or personal restrictions. Chairs are asked to send any circuit profiles that appear to match the returning minister's profile to the Chair of SMG and the Chair representing the returning SMG member. This should be done as soon as possible and at least two weeks before the publication of the profiles.

5. The returning SMG member identifies appointments that are of interest, in consultation with their representing Chair.

6. The sub-group, meeting via Zoom or phone conference, and well in advance of the normal stationing rounds, agrees a match and a visit is arranged. The Circuit Stewards will be informed of the match by the Chair in whose District the circuit falls. The returning SMG member will be informed of the match by their representing Chair.

7. The normal matching process is followed from this point onwards. The outcome of the visit will be reported to the District Chair and to the representing Chair. If the circuit does not invite the returning SMG member or the SMG member declines the match, then the sub-group will arrange a second match.

8. If a match cannot be agreed prior to the normal stationing rounds, the stationing of the returning SMG member will become the responsibility of the Stationing Action Group. The Stationing Action Group begins its work for this and other appointments after the normal stationing rounds have been completed.

9. If a match is agreed prior to the publication of the profiles the Circuit profile will not appear in the circulated documents but will be circulated to all members of SMG

10. Formal agreement to such a match will take place at SMG 1. Round 0 will be called and the member of SMG to be stationed will withdraw. The representing Chair and the receiving Chair will be asked to speak briefly to the profiles and process before agreement from the meeting is sought.

The above process will be governed by the following Code of Practice:

11. The returning SMG member will not be present in the Regional Stationing Group meeting when a representing Chair is appointed. The returning SMG member will withdraw from the meeting while this matter is discussed.

12. The representing Chair will offer whatever help is needed in completing a ministerial profile and circulate the profile to appropriate Chairs of District (see 4. above). There will be no conversation about particular appointments either with the returning SMG member or other District Chairs.

13. Chairs are asked to send circuit profiles which they believe best match the returning presbyter's profile to the representing Chair and the Chair of SMG who will circulate it to the sub-group. (see 4 above)

14. Where the returning SMG member needs clarification of information in a circuit profile or needs further information, this should be obtained only through their representing Chair.

15. Following a conversation between the returning SMG member and their representing Chair the returning member of the SMG may indicate to the designated Chair, appointments in which they would be interested, and this information is shared with the sub-group (see 2. above)

16. There will be no conversation about the details of their stationing between the returning SMG member and other District Chairs.

17. If a match is not achieved in advance of the normal stationing rounds, there will be no further conversations about the stationing until the Stationing Action Group begins its work.

Stationing Committee June 2021and amended September 2023

Members of SMG entering into stationing with severely limited geography

When a Chair has limited geographical availability, every effort will be made to ensure that their personal limitations are considered transparently and not in any way prioritised over the needs of others in stationing who may have equal or similar geographic availability.

If a member of SMG enters into stationing with very limited deployability, then profiles will be sought in the usual way, but will not be considered until after the deadline for the September meetings of the

Regional Stationing Groups. All Chairs submitting profiles for consideration will be asked to confirm that were a match to be made it would not impact significantly on ministers in their region who also have limited deployability.

If there is no significant impact on other ministers with limited deployability, the small group appointed by the Stationing Committee will meet and make a match in the way described above.

If there is, or could be, significant impact then the profiles concerned will not be considered. If this means that a match cannot be made in advance of SMG then the Chair will appoint their Lay Stationing Representative to act on their behalf until such time as a match has been agreed for them and will be considered during SMG.

Once a match has been agreed the Chair will be free to resume their responsibilities with regard to stationing, however, their deputy will continue to act should any ongoing conflict of role or interest be identified. The best interests of the ministers and circuits in their District will be upheld at all times.

Where a member of SMG who is to be stationed expresses limited deployability that includes or is exclusively the District which they currently serve.

The normal protocols for stationing a member of SMG assume that a Chair is not stationed back to their own District in the same way that any other presbyter is not normally stationed back to a circuit in which they are serving.

Where a Chair has such limited deployability that they can only be stationed back to the District they are currently serving there is an inherent conflict of interest for as long as they remain unmatched. It is vital that the potential conflict of interest is declared as early as possible.

Limited deployability will be robustly challenged by the Secretary of Conference and the Chair representing them in stationing to see if any geographical limitations are capable of being stretched as would be the case with any other presbyter. There shall be an exploration of any implications for the ministry of the incoming Chair of District and the Secretary of Conference may ask for particular assurances to be given within the presbyter's profile.

Where there continues to be a wish to be stationed within the District, they currently serve they shall appoint their Lay Stationing Representative as their deputy and take no further part in conversations with presbyters and circuits within their district about invitations or profiles.

Their profile shall be included in the profiles circulated to all circuits and will be matched alongside other presbyters at SMG in the usual way to ensure fairness and transparency.

Where a member of SMG is unclear about whether they will be in stationing or enters into stationing late.

The member of SMG shall inform the Secretary of Conference, Chair of Stationing Matching and Chair of Stationing Committee as soon as possible in confidence so that a decision can be taken on how any potential conflict of interest shall be resolved. Where appropriate, the Regional Stationing Group will be asked to appoint a person to represent them should they be in stationing.

A decision will be taken by the SoC, CS and CSM with the Chair representing the presbyter where appropriate as to how any potential conflict of interest will be declared and managed. Should a decision be taken that they need to be matched at a normal round of SMG the Chair will appoint the lay stationing representative as their deputy and take no further part in conversations with presbyters or circuits.

If it is clear that they will be submitting a profile but a decision is taken that they will only be matched after all rounds of SMG are complete then the conflict of interest shall be declared at the beginning of each round of SMG, the profile should not be circulated to Chairs and Lay Stationing Reps until after SM2 and will be considered by the Stationing Action Group.

Text in italics agreed at the March 2024 Stationing Committee

APPENDIX 2

GUIDANCE TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN A PRESBYTER OR DEACON TO BE STATIONED IS IN A PERIOD OF ILL HEALTH

The Chair of a minister suffering a period of ill health during the stationing process will be aware of the extra anxiety this may cause and should offer support and reassurance that opportunities will remain for a match to be made when the medical opinion is such that this is appropriate.

1. If at any time during the stationing process a presbyter or deacon who is to be stationed is signed off work by their GP for a short period and for a condition which will not be adversely affected by the stationing process itself, the process should continue as normally as possible.

   If this is during the period of consultation on re-invitation or during the preparation of profiles, the progress through the stationing process may be held up. Provided that the process has been followed correctly it is possible, in such cases, for profiles to be accepted for matching after the dates set out in the Code of Practice.

   If the time of ill health is during the period of matching and visiting, the representing Chair or Warden should inform the Chair of the Stationing Matching Group or the Chair of the Diaconal Stationing Sub-Committee as appropriate and ask for the profile to be withdrawn from matching until the minister has returned to health.

   If appropriate and helpful, once the minister has re-entered the stationing process and been matched the representing and receiving Chairs should share with the receiving circuit any special arrangements to be made to facilitate the visit and, if necessary, the timescale for a visit should be extended. In order to provide the best support for the presbyter or deacon such appropriate information should be shared with the receiving Circuit steward and Superintendent minister prior to the visit. The agreement of the minister in stationing should be sought on if, when and by whom such appropriate information might be more widely shared.

2. When a minister is suffering a prolonged period of ill health at the beginning of the period of re-invitation the Warden or representing Chair should inform the Assistant Secretary of the Conference and seek the advice of the Connexional Well-Being Adviser. Conversations with the ASC and Wellbeing Adviser may include matters such as the advisability of proceeding with the consultation and stationing process and advice on seeking assistance from Occupational Health professionals and/or a second medical opinion.

   It may not be possible for a presbyter or deacon suffering a prolonged period of ill health to explore a re-invitation or a change of appointment and significant support and reassurance to the minister will be required. Opportunities for a recuperative period, phased return to work and reasonable adjustments for future working should be explored.

   If it is judged that entering the stationing process would be inadvisable for the minister careful consideration should also be given to when and how to involve the current Circuit stewards and the Superintendent Minister. Support should also be offered to them.

   If the time of prolonged ill health begins during the period of matching and visiting the representing Chair or Warden should inform the Chair of SMG or the Chair of the DSSC as appropriate and ask for the profile to be withdrawn from matching until the minister has returned to health. As above, the ASC should be informed and the advice of the Wellbeing officer should be sought by the representative Chair or the Warden.

   If appropriate, reassurance that opportunities will remain for future engagement with the stationing process should be given as should support to assist the minister when this becomes possible.

As above, when such a minister is able to enter in the Stationing process care should be taken to ensure that matters relating to reasonable adjustments for both the visit and for future working and any other requirements are communicated sensitively by the representative Chair or the Warden to the receiving Chair. In order to provide the best support for the presbyter or deacon such information should be shared with the receiving Circuit steward and Superintendent minister prior to the visit. The agreement of the minister in stationing should be sought on when and what information might be shared with the Circuit Invitation Committee, other Circuit staff and Circuit and Church stewards and what they might prefer to discuss in person or prefer to keep confidential.

Stationing Committee October 2022

APPENDIX 3 PART-TIME APPOINTMENTS

The Code of Practice refers to a Conference report on part-time appointments in Section F:
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Two sections are included below for handy reference

Defining a part-time appointment

1. The scope of a part-time appointment should be defined according to the time that the presbyter or deacon might reasonably be expected to devote to it. This necessitates some definition of the expectations for a full-time appointment. These are not, and should not be, easily quantified, but neither should they be left to chance. SO 802(5) and (7) equate one quarter of stipend with ten hours a week and half stipend with twenty hours a week. With Sundays in addition, this implies a 'full-time working week', which is not in excess of the European Working Time Directive figure of 48 hours.

2. The amount of time covered by any appointment should be described in terms of sessions rather than hours, in order to set a framework without being overly functional and equating 'doing' with 'being'. The expectation should be that a deacon or presbyter in a full-time appointment should be engaged in activities directly related to the appointment held (including preparation) for the equivalent of two sessions (assuming a full day to consist of three sessions) for six days a week including Sundays. This allows for time when the deacon or presbyter is available but not engaged in activities directly related to the appointment (the analogy of 'on-call' time may be helpful) but does not preclude time when the person is unavailable (agreed rest days, holidays, days excluded in the outline of appointment for a part-time appointment – see below). Provision for a weekly rest day, quarterly 'refresher' days, annual holidays and sabbaticals is laid down in Standing Orders and guidelines and should be observed by all parties. The Church should proclaim its commitment to a life of *shalom* by adhering to this 'gold standard' in its definitions and by doing all it can to make its achievement possible.

3. A part-time appointment should therefore be defined as 'x days a week, assuming a day to consist of three sessions of which two should be devoted to activities directly related to the appointment held'. This allows for the understanding that a minister in a part-time appointment needs space within the 'working' day. Once the overall expectation is clear the appointment may legitimately be described as 'half-time' or whatever proportion is appropriate. It is important to preserve the flexibility demanded by the unpredictable nature of pastoral ministry although this must be balanced by the need for people to know when and how the minister may be contacted.

4. Special considerations apply to presbyteral appointments in respect of Sundays and the leading of worship in general. In general, commitments to the leading of worship should be in proportion to the rest of the appointment, but it must be recognised that in some appointments there is a disproportionate need for worship leading, preaching and/or presiding at communion, and that midweek acts of worship must also be taken into account.

5. The relationship between the amount of time dedicated to the appointment and the activities involved in it must be defined in an outline of the appointment agreed by the District Policy Committee. This agreement should include:

    - A general description of the ministry to be undertaken;
    - The way in which that ministry is linked to Methodist discipline and practice;
    - Agreed practical details (hours, expenses, support etc.).

    Guidelines and pro formas for drawing up an outline of appointment are available from the Formation in Ministry Office.

6. The outline of the appointment should therefore, in its description of the ministry to be undertaken, make clear the reason for the appointment's being described as x days a week. It

will provide the justification for the proportion of stipend (but see 4.1-4 below) payable under SO 801(1)(a). Defining a part-time appointment should therefore begin with an assessment of the work to be undertaken and should proceed by way of an outline of the appointment to a definition of hours and allowance (if applicable).

Stationing and part-time appointments

7. When appointments that are not full-time, stipendiary and with a manse become part of the presbyteral stationing process:

- Part-time stipendiary appointments are to be dealt with through the normal stationing process: the Circuit should provide a profile. There is no obligation on the Matching Group to find a minister.
- Non-stipendiary appointments (whether or not they require the minister to live in a manse) which consist of more than three days a week (i.e. half-time) and Sundays pro rata, are to be dealt with through the normal stationing process: the Circuit should provide a profile. There is, however, no requirement on the Matching Group to provide a minister. Such appointments are dealt with through the Matching Group for the sake of transparency and consistency.
- Non-stipendiary appointments (whether or not they require the minister to live in a manse) which consist of less than three days a week and Sundays pro rata, are to be listed in the profile book but no details are necessary. There is no requirement on the Matching Group to provide a minister.

8. Standing Order 781(2) calls for all presbyters, deacons and probationers to have a review of experience in the current appointment, development in ministry and future deployment as follows:

- in what is expected to be the penultimate year of the current appointment;
- every four years for those in appointments not within the control of the church;
  at the minister's request at other times.

This normally takes the form of a pastoral conversation with the Chair. All ministers considering a change in the nature of their appointment should begin with a pastoral conversation with their Chair of District.

9. Standing Order 543(1) specifies that 'the initial invitation to a minister shall be for a period of five years' (except when ecumenical agreements dictate otherwise – SO 547(2)). This applies to all appointments. Arrangements for review and extension of part-time and non-stipendiary appointments are therefore the same as for those, which are full-time and stipendiary. Any change in the nature of a part-time appointment must go through the District Policy Committee.

10. When a part-time appointment is not renewed and the minister has to go 'without appointment' and without a manse (only after the pastoral processes described above) their situation should be reviewed annually. The possible implications at the end of such an appointment should be carefully explored at the start. The fact that the Church is not under the practical obligation to provide a stipend and a manse does not exempt it from the spiritual obligation of doing all in its power to enable the individual to find an appropriate ministry within the limits of their availability.

N.B. Ministers without appointment and Supernumerary ministers are non-stipendiary.

Standing Order 774 covers Ministers without Appointment, and 774 (10) indicates that "they shall be expected to give such help to the Circuit as they are able, in appropriate cases shall be entitled to receive remuneration by the decision of the Circuit Meeting,and shall have all the rights and privileges of church members in that Circuit.

There is guidance on the Methodist Church Website regarding the ministry of supernumeraries: https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/supernumerary-ministers/

It is appropriate for those who offer a significant amount of their time to the work of the circuit to be offered remuneration. Where a supernumerary is undertaking part of a role that would have

been that of a minister in the active work, it would not be inappropriate for that remuneration to be equivalent to the basic stipend on a pro rata basis.

If a supernumerary is offering to take pastoral charge or offering the equivalent of 50% or more of a full-time appointment this is viewed as a return to the active work, the supernumerary concerned must seek the permission of the stationing advisory committee. Your district chair will advise how to do this.

APPENDIX 4 CHECKLIST FOR PROFILES

Before any profiles are submitted to Stationing Administration Chairs of District and Lay Stationing Representatives should check the following

- Is the profile accurate?
- For presbyters
    - Has permission to reside in one's own home, if such a need has arisen, been applied for to the Ministries Committee Manses Group? If the profile indicates that they will live in their own home has permission been grants by the Ministries Committee Manses Group?
    - Does the minister have an up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check or PVG and if not has the renewal process begun for those ministers whose checks are older than five years?
    - Has any curtailment process been signed off by the ASC?
    - If the minister is Recognised and Regarded (R and R), has application been made and approval been given for them to serve in a further appointment?
- For circuits
    - Is the manse in accordance with *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* (CPD), e.g. SO 803?
    - Does there need to be a reasoned statement as to why the profile should be considered for matching (needed if appointments have less than 150 members and/or no obvious opportunities for the development of mission)
- Approval of changes where necessary
    - Have the Chairs of SMG and SC seen and approved the request for changes?