



The **Methodist** Church

**Principles and
Protocols for the
Stationing Advisory
Committee**

2025-2026

THIS GUIDE IS FOR:

Chairs of District and the Warden of the MDO: The whole document should be studied but your attention is especially drawn to section 5 and to the need to alert others to the relevant sections.

Superintendents: The whole document should be studied but your attention is especially drawn to section 2.

Ministers in circuit appointments: The whole document should be studied but your attention is especially drawn to sections 2 to 5 inclusive.

Ministers not in circuit appointments: The whole document should be studied but your attention is especially drawn to sections 2 and 5.

Overall principles agreed by the Stationing Committee

Please note that in this document, as in Standing Orders, 'minister' refers to an ordained presbyter or deacon (definition adopted by the Conference of 2012).

1. The Stationing Advisory Committee (SAC) deals with ministerial appointments that are not part of circuit ministry. Currently, the work of the SAC is essentially to make recommendations to the Stationing Committee, giving permission for ministers to serve outside the regular framework of circuit appointments. Part of this work is to have pastoral and vocational conversations with ministers to discern, with them, what category they would come under in such appointments. The SAC is mindful of the covenant relationship and commissioning that ministers enter at ordination and the duty of oversight that Superintendents and Chairs of District have. The Stationing Committee usually follow recommendations from SAC but ultimately, and in cases where the Stationing Committee do not agree with the recommendations of SAC, decisions lie with Conference.

The SAC is governed by Standing Order 261, which refers in turn to others, particularly to Standing Orders 774 (without appointment), 790(3) (supernumerary on compassionate grounds), 793(1) (return to the active work) & 802 (part-time appointments). The SAC will also make reference to SO261(3) in regard to consulting the Invitation Committee, especially if the proposed move out of circuit ministry is mid-appointment, as this may have an impact on mission and ministry plans.

See Appendix for the relevant Standing Orders.

2. It follows, therefore, that any minister, probationer or student minister considering or planning to undertake a form of ministry that falls outside the regular circuit framework, should contact the Convenor of SAC panels, currently the Revd Ann Lett revannlett@gmail.com. In the case of a Deacon considering such action, they must first contact the Warden of the Diaconal Order who makes the referral to the SAC.

However, it is **essential** that ministers have a conversation with their Superintendent, District Chair, or, in the case of deacons, the Warden of the Diaconal Order **before** doing this. Those conversations should be held in time for full consideration of the situation and should be open and honest. They will also give attention to the implications for the circuit, or district, of the minister's plans. There is no desire to stifle change, or a call, but consideration must be taken of the impact on numbers of vacancies against number of ministers available for stationing. Consideration will

also be made of issues arising if an ordained person wishes to take on a lay position or wishes to be 'Without Appointment' (S.O. 744).

The status of some appointments is not easy to determine. Some posts in theological education fall under one of the categories above. Some school chaplaincies are on the stations while others are not. The rule of thumb must be, 'If in doubt, contact the SAC for guidance.'

A minister or probationer who wishes to be stationed for the purpose of undertaking a course of study or research shall, after the required vocational conversation with their Superintendent, District Chair and, in the case of a deacon, the Warden of the MDO, apply to the SAC. The committee shall make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee, which may grant or refuse the application. Such a recommendation should specify the course of study or research to be undertaken, its duration and other specifics as in S.O. 773.

The SAC also deals with permission to reside or serve abroad.

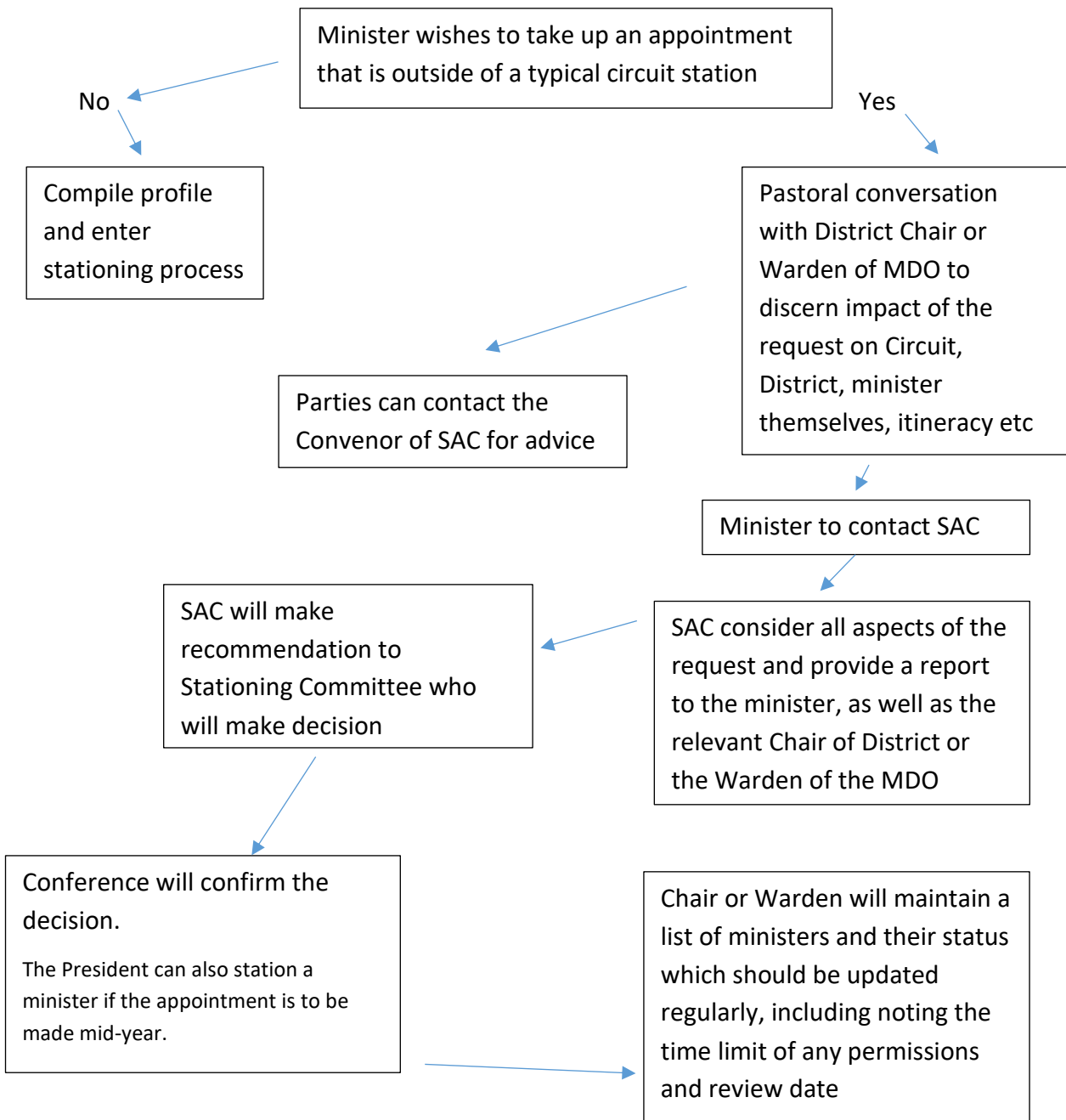
The Convener is available to offer advice and guidance at any stage. An initial contact does not necessarily lead to an interview with a panel.

3. Please note that the requirement to contact the SAC includes **all** those interested in appointments that are either (a) with churches other than the Methodist Church in Britain or (b) with other bodies, e.g. in healthcare and education chaplaincies. This is the current working definition of 'appointments not within the control of the Church' but the Stationing Committee is keeping this and Methodist Church appointments that are open to lay and ordained alike, under review.
4. Presbyters wishing to return to circuit ministry should contact the SAC. This applies to those returning from abroad as well as those with permission to serve in Britain. Deacons should make contact with the Warden, who will determine whether to make a referral to SAC or consider the return under DSSC protocols.
5. As ministerial appointments become more diverse, it will be increasingly important to ensure good oversight of ministers who have been given permission either (a) to be in an appointment not within the control of the Church or (b) to be without appointment or (c) to study. The responsibility for doing this falls on Circuits and Districts, and, in the case of deacons, on the Methodist Diaconal Order. The pastoral act of knowing who is in the District and their current status is an important element of the Chair's, and Warden's, work. The following guidelines should be observed to enable this to be done effectively:

- a. District Chairs (and/or Lay Stationing Representatives) should maintain a list of all the-ministers in the District who have permissions from the SAC as above. The Warden should maintain a similar list of deacons. The District Chair, or Warden, should receive a copy of the SAC report and may obtain a duplicate if necessary. A copy is also sent to the relevant Superintendent minister. The Convenor and the Administrator (contactable at stationingadministration@methodistchurch.org.uk) of the SAC also maintain a list of those with permissions and can be consulted if necessary.
- b. Permissions are time limited. The District Chair and the Warden, in the case of deacons, should have a pastoral conversation with the minister during the connexional year before the last year of that period. The list described in a. above should also contain the future dates for these conversations. This will assist in the timely vocational conversations which should normally begin in Spring. Reference to the [Summary of the Invitation Process](#) will help in ensuring that deadlines are met.
- c. Effective follow-up is particularly important for those given permission to be 'without appointment'. District Chairs should make every effort to keep in touch with them although the SAC fully recognises the difficulties that sometimes arise.
- d. When a minister with permission from the SAC moves from one District to another, the minister should speak with their Chair about the need to be listed in another circuit. The current Chair should contact the new Chair, sending a copy of the SAC report to the receiving Chair and also informing the Conference office of the move.
- e. The Secretary of the Conference is responsible for maintaining contact with those ministers given permission to serve and/or reside abroad.

29.01.2026

BASIC FLOW CHART



APPENDIX

CPD 2025 Standing Orders for the SAC Protocols

42 Inability to Fulfil Requirements....

(7) The case of a minister who has been designated 'without appointment' under Standing Order 040 or this Standing Order shall be reported to the Stationing Advisory Committee. If the person concerned seeks to return to the active work [...] **the person** shall apply to the President, in which case the application shall be considered and determined as set out in clauses (1) to (10) of Standing Order 761, with any necessary changes.

252 Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee...

(4) The Secretary of the Stationing Advisory Committee shall be entitled to attend and speak at meetings as consultant to the committee when the business requires it.

260 Stationing Committee. (1) There shall be a connexional Stationing Committee appointed annually by the Conference, which shall consist of...

- (v) the chair of the Stationing Advisory Committee;

261 Stationing Advisory Committee. (1) The Stationing Committee shall annually appoint a Stationing Advisory Committee.

(2) The committee shall:

- (i) explore the opportunities for ministry in various areas of society and community life and in ecumenical agencies and, where appropriate, encourage presbyters and deacons with suitable qualifications to consider applying for such appointments;
- (ii) receive, co-ordinate and interpret reports of such ministries;
- (iii) consult with the members of the Connexional Team who have responsibilities for work done by presbyters and deacons in chaplaincies and appointments not within the control of the Church;
- (iv) consider applications from presbyters and deacons in Full Connexion and probationers for full-time service in chaplaincies and appointments not within the control of the Church, and from employing authorities;
- (v) report on such applications and opportunities with recommendations to the Stationing Committee to be presented, if they are approved, to the Conference as an integral part of the stations;
- (vi) advise on the movements of presbyters and deacons within such appointments and between them and Circuits in the light of the initial and subsequent reviews of deployment prescribed by Standing Order 781;
- (vii) perform the functions prescribed by Standing Order 802 in relation to part-time appointments;
- (viii) perform the functions prescribed by Standing Orders 790(3) and 793(1) in relation to applications to become a supernumerary or to return to the active work;
- (ix) advise the President or the Vice-President on behalf of the President on recommendations which would involve a presbyter's or deacon's moving during the course of the connexional year;
- (x) perform such other functions as may be required from time to time by Standing Orders.

For the incorporation of the committee's recommendations into the draft of stations, see S.O. 782(4).

As to (i) see S.O. 540(4).

As to (x) see e.g. S.O. 774(11).

(3) If any application or potential application under clause (2)(i) or (iv) above involves the possibility of the curtailment of a current period of invitation or appointment or deemed invitation or appointment of a person in a circuit appointment the committee shall consult the circuit Invitation Committee and take its views into account.

376 Reimbursements and other Special Payments...

(6) Payment may also be made out of such funds at the discretion of the council or of any committee or officer to which the council may delegate this discretion:

- (ii) in accordance with any recommendation of the Stationing Advisory Committee or the connexional Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee under Standing Order 774(6); or...

544 Curtailment....

(3) This Standing Order does not apply by virtue of clause (1)(a)(ii) above if the possibility of curtailment arises because the person concerned is being considered for an appointment to the Connexional Team, or for some other

appointment by the Conference for which the Connexional Council is required to submit a nomination, or as a district Chair, or has been requested by the Stationing Committee or any sub-committee or group acting on its behalf to accept a change of station, or has applied to the Stationing Advisory Committee under Standing Order 261(2)(iv), or is being encouraged by that committee to apply under Standing Order 261(2)(i).

735 Permission to Serve another Conference or Church. (1) Overseas appointments under Standing Order 780(1)(vi) and permissions under Standing Order 773 are not within the scope of this Standing Order.

S.O. 773 deals with applications for permission to study.

(2) In all other cases where a minister wishes to be permitted to serve another conference or church, application shall be made to the Stationing Advisory Committee which shall make recommendations in the case of a presbyter to the Secretary of the Conference and in the case of a deacon to the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order and the Secretary of the Conference. The Secretary shall bring them to the Conference or, in cases arising after the meeting of the Conference where the urgency of the situation demands it, to the President or the Vice-President on the President's behalf...

772 Residence Abroad...

(2) No presbyter or deacon in Full Connexion whose ministry is based on the home Districts and no probationer in training for such a ministry shall reside abroad unless appointed to a station within the control of the Church or to an overseas appointment under Standing Order 780(1)(vi) or as a chaplain to the forces or permitted to do so under Standing Order 735 or 773 or this Standing Order.

For forces chaplains see S.O. 286.

(3) Applications for permission to reside abroad for the purposes of study shall be dealt with under Standing Order 773.

773 Permission to Study. (1) A minister or probationer who wishes to be stationed for the purpose of undertaking a course of study or research shall apply to the Stationing Advisory Committee, and that committee shall make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee, which may grant or refuse the application. Such a recommendation shall specify the course of study or research to be undertaken and its duration, whether the minister, deacon or probationer concerned is to reside in the home Districts or abroad, and whether he or she is to be in receipt of a stipend from the Church. In the case of a probationer the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee shall be consulted.

(2) The names of ministers and probationers permitted to study under this Standing Order, unless permitted to reside abroad under Standing Order 772, shall in the stations be printed in the Circuit in which they reside as 'permission to study'; they shall be expected to give such help to the Circuit as they are able, in appropriate cases where they are not otherwise in receipt of a full stipend from the Church 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.

They may be members of the Circuit Meeting (S.O. 510(1)(ii)) and (if eligible) Local Preachers' Meeting (S.O. 560(1)) of the Circuit in which they reside and attend the meetings of circuit staff (S.O. 523(1)).

As to eligibility for circuit and local committees and offices see S.O. 503(1)(i) and 606(1)(i) and the Standing Orders relating to specific committees and offices.

774 Ministers without Appointment. (1) A minister may be without appointment by permission obtained under clause (2), (3), or (4) below on the grounds specified in clause (5) below, or by direction of the Stationing Committee or the President or Vice-President under clause (9) below, or by the operation of Part 11 or Section 04, or S.O. 775(3), 782(8), 783(7), or 790(4).

(2) A minister who wishes to be without appointment shall apply to the Stationing Advisory Committee, and that committee shall make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee, which may grant or refuse the application.

(3) A student or probationer who wishes to be without appointment on being received into Full Connexion shall apply to the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee and that committee, if satisfied of the applicant's intention both to complete training (where incomplete) and probation and, in due course, to enter the active work, shall make a recommendation to the Presbyteral Session of the Conference or the Conference Diaconal Committee, as the case may be, which may grant or refuse the application.

For the Conference Diaconal Committee see cl. 25A of the Deed of Union (Book II, Part 1) and Section 18.

(4) A minister, probationer or student may, on any grounds not arising or discovered until after the last meeting (before the Conference) of the committee to which application would have been made under the above clauses, make a similar application to the President at any time before the opening of the Conference, and the President or the Vice-President on his or her behalf may grant or refuse the application, but shall not grant an application by a probationer or student unless satisfied of the applicant's intentions as described in clause (3) above. Any applications granted shall be reported by the President to the Presbyteral Session or, as the case may be, the Conference Diaconal Committee.

(5) An application may be granted under clauses (2), (3) or (4) above on compassionate or domestic grounds which in the judgment of the committee or the President or Vice-President, as the case may be, make it impossible or undesirable for the applicant to be subject to normal stationing.

(6) A minister who has been granted exemption under clauses (1) to (5) above shall normally be at no cost to the Church, but in exceptional circumstances the Stationing Advisory Committee or the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee may recommend a payment under Standing Order 376(6)(ii).

Information about any possible implication of the rules of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme or Methodist Ministers' Housing Society for the benefits of a minister undergoing a change in conditions of service may be obtained through the Stationing Advisory Committee (for which, see S.O. 261). See also S.O. 805.

(7) In cases where permission is granted under clauses (2) to (5) above, it shall be for five years or for a specified shorter period. In the year before the end of the period for which permission has been granted the minister shall make application to continue to be without appointment for a further period, or to return to or commence the active work. Application shall be made to the Stationing Advisory Committee, and that committee shall make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee, which may grant or refuse the application.

(8) At any time a minister granted permission to be without appointment under clauses (2) to (7) above may by permission of the Stationing Committee, granted on application made through the Stationing Advisory Committee, return to or commence the active work. In exceptional cases permission may be granted and an appointment made to a station by the President or the Vice-President on his or her behalf.

(9) The Stationing Committee, or exceptionally the President or the Vice-President on his or her behalf, may require a minister or probationer for whom no appointment can be found to be without appointment and shall in each case determine what sums (if any) should be paid under Standing Order 376(5)(ii), and what other arrangements should be made. A minister or probationer without appointment under this clause may be appointed to a station during the year by the President or by the Vice-President on his or her behalf. Only in exceptional circumstances shall a minister or probationer be without appointment in this category for more than one year.

(10) The names of persons stationed under the above clauses shall in the stations be printed in the Circuit in which they reside as 'without appointment'; 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.

They may be members of the Circuit Meeting (S.O. 510(1)(ii)) and (if eligible) Local Preachers' Meeting (S.O. 560(1)) of the Circuit in which they reside and attend the meetings of circuit staff (S.O. 523(1)).

As to eligibility for circuit and local committees and offices see S.O. 503(1)(i) and 606(1)(i) and the Standing Orders relating to specific committees and offices.

(11) Where following disciplinary action under Part 11 or proceedings under Section 04 the Stationing Advisory Committee has been informed that a minister has been designated 'without appointment', the committee shall ensure that, at such intervals as it shall think fit (but not exceeding five years), the person concerned is offered the opportunity to meet the committee to discuss whether he or she should make an application to the President to return to the active work. Any such application shall be considered and determined as set out in clauses (1) to (10) of Standing Order 761 with any necessary changes.

780 Types of Station. (1) Presbyters, deacons and probationers shall be stationed by the Conference in one of the following ways...

- (iv) in a chaplaincy relating to the forces, prisons, health-care institutions, educational institutions, work-places or other bodies as approved by the Stationing Committee on a recommendation of the Stationing Advisory Committee or the relevant members of the Connexional Team;
- (v) in a Circuit, but with authorisation granted by the Stationing Committee on a recommendation from the Stationing Advisory Committee to serve in an appointment not directly within the control of the Church;

781 Initial Deployment and Subsequent Review. (1) (a) In the penultimate year of pre-ordination training an interview shall be conducted with each student concerning

- (i) his or her development in pre-ordination training;
- (ii) changes in his or her personal circumstances since the preliminary assessment made in accordance with Standing Order 710(3)(b);
- (iii) the type of appointment in which he or she might be deployed and the terms and conditions of service under which he or she might serve in the light of the above.

(b) The interview shall be conducted according to connexional proformas and guidelines provided by the Ministerial Probationers Oversight Committee in consultation with the Stationing Advisory Committee.

(c) The interview shall be conducted by the relevant person specified in those guidelines.

(2) (a) In what is expected to be the penultimate year of an appointment within the control of the Church, whether such expectation arises under Section 54 or otherwise, or in every fourth year in the case of an appointment not

within the control of the Church, or, in either case, at other times upon his or her request, an interview shall be conducted with each presbyter, deacon and probationer to review

- (i) his or her experience in the current appointment;
- (ii) his or her development as a presbyter or deacon;
- (iii) his or her future deployment in the light of the above and of any relevant factors in his or her personal circumstances.

(b) The interview shall be conducted according to connexional proformas and guidelines provided by the Stationing Advisory Committee.

(c) The interview shall be conducted by the relevant person specified in those guidelines.

(3) After the interviews specified in clauses (1) and (2) above a report about the initial or future deployment of the person concerned shall be submitted to the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee or the Stationing Advisory Committee as appropriate, which shall review it, conduct any further investigations or interviews as it deems to be necessary or as are requested by any of the parties concerned, and make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee.

783 Stationing Procedures: diaconal...

(4) In order to discharge this responsibility [diaconal stationing], the Warden shall obtain from the Circuits and deacons involved and from any other appropriate bodies all relevant information, including any information requested by the *Resourcing* Committee. He or she shall also obtain from the Stationing Advisory Committee its recommendations as to any diaconal appointments within its purview and shall take into account the requests and suggestions submitted by Chairs of Districts...

790 Application to become Supernumerary...

(3) A minister who is not within the scope of clause (1) or (2) above may apply for permission to become a supernumerary on compassionate grounds. Any such person shall, after giving notice to the Chair (and, in the case of a deacon, also to the Warden), apply to the Stationing Advisory Committee, stating the grounds on which the application is made. The committee shall make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee which shall in turn make a recommendation to the Presbyteral Session of the Conference or the Conference Diaconal Committee, as the case may be...

The level of pension, if any, to be paid in such cases is determined by the rules of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme (see note to cl. (1D) above).

792 Continuing Ministry...

(2) Where a supernumerary minister undertakes pastoral work on a regular basis in a Circuit or institution connected with the Church, he or she shall do so under a letter of understanding entered into with the consent of his or her Chair and the appropriate Superintendent or head of institution and, in the case of a deacon, the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order. The letter of understanding shall be framed in accordance with connexional guidelines issued by the Stationing Advisory Committee. Such guidelines shall include information about such matters as remuneration and pensions and shall ensure that no contract is created.

(3) Where it is desired that a supernumerary presbyter exercise pastoral charge in a Circuit, he or she shall, in order to be eligible to do so, apply to return to the active work in accordance with Standing Order 793.

793 Return to the Active Work. (1) Subject to clause (2) below any application by a supernumerary presbyter or deacon in Full Connexion for permission to return to the active work shall be made to the Stationing Advisory Committee. The convener of that committee shall arrange for an Occupational Health assessment as specified in Standing Order 715(2) to be undertaken by the applicant. The assessment shall be considered in accordance with the Health Policy adopted for candidates under Standing Order 715(1) with any necessary modifications and reported to the Advisory Committee and, where application has been made to become a member of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme, to the Trustee of the scheme. The Advisory Committee shall consult the Chair and Superintendent of the supernumerary concerned, and, where the supernumerary is a deacon, the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order, and make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee, which shall in turn make a recommendation to the Conference. In the case of urgent stationing needs or other emergency the President or the Vice-President on the President's behalf may consider the recommendation from the Advisory Committee, grant immediate permission and report to the Conference.

For the advisory committee see S.O. 261.

802 Remuneration of Part-time Chaplaincies and Other Work...

(5) If the total of any such remuneration and fees will exceed one quarter of the person's minimum stipend or if the total of any time spent on work to which clause (3) applies and on weddings and funerals will exceed ten hours per

week, then the Superintendent, the other ministers and probationers appointed to the Circuit and the circuit stewards shall consult in order to arrive at a just and amicable agreement which shall then, except where clause (7) below applies, be put into effect. If the work will affect the person's circuit duties or cause extra work to a ministerial colleague the agreement shall include an arrangement for some recompense to be paid to the Circuit or colleague.

(6) Where agreement is not reached locally the Chair, who will already have been consulted, shall be asked to decide (subject to clause (7) below and, in the case of a diaconal appointment, after consultation with the Warden) whether the work shall be undertaken, and if so on what terms.

(7) If clause (5) above applies and the amount involved will exceed in total one half of the person's minimum stipend or if the time spent will exceed in total 20 hours per week, then after proposals have been formulated under clause (5) or (6) above they shall be referred, in the form of an application, to the Chair and the Stationing Advisory Committee, who shall in consultation with the Stationing Committee, and, where relevant, with the Warden, together consider them as the Advisory Committee does those for full-time work in appointments not within the control of the Church and give a decision.

For the Stationing Advisory Committee see S.O. 261.

(8) If the amount specified in clause (5) above rises or falls the arrangements shall be reviewed and, if necessary, revised.

(9) Superintendents shall by the 31st March in each year report in writing to the Chair on all agreements and arrangements made or revised under this Standing Order.