

Resourcing Leadership

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Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolutions	47/1. The Council receives the report. 47/2. The Council directs the Connexional Secretary to keep the implementation of the recommendations by the Team under review so as to ensure that they complement and inform other pieces of work in the area of vocational development.

Resourcing Leadership

The Resourcing Leadership Working Party was appointed by the Methodist Council (MC/14/86) in response to Notice of Motion 206 (2014):

'In the light of the General Secretary's report that urges the whole Connexion to "focus on those things that make for an ever better Church", and the report of the working party which has reviewed the role of the Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary, the Conference:

- a) identifies a need for the church to be better resourced in the variety of leadership roles.*
- b) judges that both ministers and lay people should be better enabled to discern and explore the gifts and graces that they offer in the service of the church,*

and therefore directs the Methodist Council:

- (1) to make available resources and training for this purpose;*
- (2) to establish a working party to consider this need.*

The Conference further directs the working party, in collaboration with the Ministries Committee, to consider:

- o mechanisms by which the church might enable ministers and lay people to explore their calling to the variety of leadership roles within the church, in-particular senior leadership roles*
- o training, development and discernment opportunities to equip potential leaders to fulfil their calling.*
- o how the Connexion might ensure greater representation of ministers from underrepresented groups (such as women, members of black and minority ethnic groups and those who are part of the missing generation ie under 45 years old) in the future leadership of the Methodist Church.*

and to report to the Conference no later than 2016.'

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council considered a report from the Working Party in January 2016 (MC/16/20). The Council discussion drew attention to a number of pieces of work at various stages of development which related directly to the terms of the Notice of Motion and to the proposals emerging from the Working Party. This work includes a report on ministry in the Methodist Church being prepared by the Faith and Order Committee; work in the Ministries Committee on probationer studies, the first five years in ministry, continuing development in ministry and sabbaticals; pilots for structured supervision following the Past Cases Review (cf MC/15/86); recommendations from the Larger than Circuit Working Group about the exercise of leadership across districts (MC/16/19); and, work in the Connexional Team on church and circuit stewards training. The Council recognised that these pieces of work had a significant bearing upon the understanding and resourcing of leadership.

1.2 At the same time, the Council concluded that there were a number of proposals within the Resourcing Leadership report which could be implemented now and which did not need to wait for other pieces of work. The Secretary of the Conference was asked to liaise with the Working Group and to report back to the April 2016 Council on areas of work which could be developed now and would be of immediate benefit to the Methodist Church. (Minute 16.1.20)

Further to the discussion at the Council, and in light of a helpful conversation I had with the Resourcing Leadership Working Group shortly after the Council, the Group has now identified four key areas in which it hopes work could be developed immediately.

2. Recommendations Made by the Working Party

2.1 **Connexional Vocations Officer** – the Working Group recommends the creation of the post of Connexional Vocations Officer within the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network. Feedback from the Council indicated that this should be possible within the current Central Services budget either through the re-allocation of responsibilities within an existing role or by the creation of a new role utilising existing funds. The Working Party see advantages in developing a role which:

- Acts as a focus for vocational exploration throughout the Connexion;
- Develops advocacy networks, including the creation of a network of volunteer advocates, often experienced practitioners, providing support and opportunities for conversation and reflection across a range of ministries, lay and ordained;
- Addresses issues related to the improvement of support for vocational discernment opportunities for under-represented groups;
- Works in partnership with circuits and districts, colleagues in the Connexional Team, and those engaged in supporting candidating processes in coordinating discernment opportunities;
- Develops, alongside others, learning and development materials and resources which support vocational discernment and development across a range of ministries, lay and ordained.

2.2 **Vocational Exploration, Learning and Development** – the group wishes to affirm a number of pieces of existing work which enable people to explore calling to a variety of leadership roles, lay and ordained, across the life of the Methodist Church. In particular, the group noted developing work around *Encounter*, an Extending Discipleship Exploring Vocation

programme developed in the Yorkshire districts and now being developed by the DMLN across all the network regions. The group also noted existing excellent practice related to the candidating process and the selection of mission partners from which a great deal can be learned and applied to other areas of the Church's life where processes of discernment and selection are significant. In addition to affirming existing work, the Working Party makes the following recommendations:

- A recurring theme in the group's discussions was the need for processes which support people, both lay and ordained, in discerning their calling at particular moments of their life and providing opportunities for continuing vocational exploration and development. The group identified moments of transition as key opportunities for reflection on future leadership roles. Provision in this area is *ad hoc* rather than consistent and benefits would accrue in developing a more consistent and coherent approach. The group encourages the development of opportunities for reflection and discernment within the context of a number of existing processes, e.g. the end of a period serving as a lay officer; in supervision; in Ministerial Development Review especially towards the end of an invitation period.
- The group noted the use of role modelling and shadowing in some areas of the Church's life, eg when a new Chair of District is appointed. There would be benefits in including elements of role modelling and shadowing across a number of roles, both lay and ordained, eg on becoming a church steward or pastoral visitor; in taking up a superintendency. The group recommends greater attention to the learning opportunities created by 'shadowing' experienced practitioners across a range of lay and ordained roles when new roles are being considered and when people are transitioning into new roles.
- In addition, the group encourages the development of a series of vocational conferences where different opportunities for ministry, lay and ordained, can be explored. The group identified a focus upon mechanisms which support the exploration of calling as key to the development of a more diverse and broadly representative leadership across the life of the Methodist Church.
- The group recommends the development of a short programme focused on 'pathways into service', offering resources to people exploring or taking up new roles within the life of the Methodist Church.

2.3 Overcoming Barriers to Participation - the group makes the following recommendations in this area:

- The group noted a lack of data and research related to the representation of a number of groups within leadership roles within the life of the Methodist Church. The group therefore recommends the development of EDI profiling across a variety of offices, lay and ordained, through both records and statistics, to identify where there are particular issues and where resources may need to be prioritised.
- The commissioning of research which looks at barriers affecting people from a number of backgrounds from offering for particular offices in the Church, including ordained ministries. The group further recommends that research be used to support the Ministries Committee, MCPOC and MCSC, in developing a wider and coordinated approach to these issues.
- The group notes the recommendations in Section 12 of MC/14/61, *Belonging Together*, which formed part of the Methodist Council report to the 2014 Conference (cf

Resolution 32/8). The group asks that particular attention is paid to these recommendations to ensure that they are or are in the process of being enacted.

- The group noted a number of resources developed in other denominations from which there is much to be learned (eg the *Call Waiting* programme in the Church of England). The group recommends the development of a number of resources and opportunities which focus on the needs of under-represented groups within the life of the Methodist Church and the development of advocacy networks to support this, working in partnership with relevant groups, eg 3Generate; the Belonging Together Ministers Group.

- 2.4 **Communications** – the group recommends that a review be undertaken of existing communications and publications designed to encourage consideration of particular roles, drawing upon the experience of those currently or recently in role, developing new materials where appropriate and utilising a variety of media.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Having considered these recommendations I am of the view that the Council should consider endorsing the general thrust of the recommendations recognising that in some areas modification may be required so as to acknowledge the broader work of the Team and developments in the wider Connexion.

- 3.2 In particular it should be noted that:

- (i) In respect of the proposal for the creation of a Connexional Vocations Officer the post would more appropriately be located in the Discipleship and Ministries Cluster rather than the DMLN in particular.
- (ii) The recommendation about the development of vocational conferences should be considered alongside the recommendations in the Larger than Circuit report (which the Council considered in January) about a review of the process by which Chairs of District are identified.
- (iii) The development of EDI profiling could profitably be considered in liaison with the EDI Committee and those in the Team with responsibility for Statistics for Mission.

- 3.3 If the Council is minded to endorse these recommendations it would be for the Team to undertake the necessary steps to address how they might most effectively be implemented within the existing budget and headcount. The Team would then include updates on progress in its reports to the Council.

The decision of the Council would be reported to the 2016 Conference.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

47/1. The Council receives the report.

47/2. The Council directs the Connexional Secretary to keep the implementation of the recommendations by the Team under review so as to ensure that they complement and inform other pieces of work in the area of vocational development.