

## Ministerial Code of Conduct

<b>Contact Name and Details</b>	The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler The Revd Ken Howcroft The Assistant Secretary of the Conference (for the PCRIG)
<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Action Required</b>	For discussion
<b>Resolutions</b>	18/1. The Council receives the report.  18/2. The Council commends the draft <i>Code</i> and asks that further work be done in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee on how it is to be incorporated in Standing Orders.  18/3. The Council recommends that the <i>Code</i> be reviewed at least every five years by the Ministries Committee.

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	A draft Code of Conduct for Ministers for consideration
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents</b>	<i>Courage, Cost and Hope</i> : a report to the Conference of the Past Cases Review 2015

1. The Code of Conduct Working Party was established to address recommendation 8 of *Courage, Cost and Hope*: 'That serious consideration be given to producing a Code of Conduct for ministers along the lines of that produced by the Church of England'.
2. The membership of the working party has developed over the last year. Initially a Professional Conduct Working Party met to review a considerable amount of material produced by other bodies, including *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy* (from the Church of England), and from within our own tradition. This group was then brought together with members of the Conference Office and the Discipleship and Ministries cluster who were working in related areas.
3. The final membership of the group has been Ms Janet Arthur, Deacon Eunice Attwood, the Revds Kenneth Howcroft (Chair), Dr Jennifer Hurd, Dr Jonathan Hustler, Paul Martin, Mrs Christine Parker, the Revds Julian Pursehouse and Paul Wood. Ms Gill Dascombe has also been a member of the group and input has been received from the Revd Diane Clutterbuck from the group working on the introduction of supervision.
4. Over the course of its meetings and electronic consultation between meetings the working party laid out a number of fundamental points of agreement:
  - That a code is necessary in order to express the accountability of ministers in a single, agreed, and authoritative document.
  - That objections to the code on the basis that it is contrary to our custom or identity as Methodists are unfounded. The expectation of appropriate conduct and accountability that the code will explicate is deeply embedded in our tradition.

- That the code therefore needs to bring together the decisions that the Conference has already made (as set out in Standing Orders and the Guidance section of *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* and any other relevant resolutions) in terms of ministers' accountability for the way in which they live out their vocation. Appended to the code, therefore, is an index of guidelines and other materials.
- That the code must 'have teeth' (ie, it needs to be clear that breaching the code will have consequences). There needs, therefore, to be an explicit link to Section 04 of Standing Orders.
- However, this negative or baseline approach should not predominate in the code. The code should also have an aspirational tone (ie, it should offer a call to excellence in ministerial practice and behaviour).
- That the code needs to be closely related to the recommendation of the Past Cases Review that ministers work under supervision.
- That ministry is not exercised individualistically nor in isolation from others (lay or ordained) in the life of the Church. The code needs to make clear that there are expectations of groups (eg, circuit staff meetings).
- That the code is for ordained ministers and that the shared nature of ministry is best expressed by there being a single code with occasional notes to clarify any differences in expectations for deacons/presbyters.
- That the code needs to be related to the competencies to be produced for those at various stages of ministry which will be based on the criteria for selection approved by the 2016 Conference.
- That in order to be effective the code needs to be relatively concise and that these points needs to be explicit in its introduction.

These points were shared with the Past Cases Review Implementation Group at its meeting in November 2016.

5. On the basis of these fundamental points of agreement, the group agreed a structure for the Code: the introductory narrative outlines the rationale, demonstrating that the central concept of 'watching over one another in love' is embedded in our tradition and arguing that the Code makes explicit much that is already part of our practice. The Code is then presented in three parts, drawing on the understanding in the 2002 report *Releasing Ministers for Ministry* that there is a 'constant interaction in each minister's life between his or her office, being, and functioning.' The 'Office' grounds the Code in the foundational ecclesial and vocational statements of the Church about ministry (eg, the Ordinal) and expresses the role within the life of the Church to which the individual is called; 'Being' indicates the internalized values of a minister and draws on the *Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry* which were approved by the Conference in 2016 (and which give the Code its nine sections); 'Function' refers to the practice of ministry and sets out in bullet points the implication of 'Office' and 'Being' as benchmarks of excellence.
6. In offering the Code, the group wished to note the provisional nature of their work. In the course of time, aspects of the Code will need to be revised and so the group asks that in receiving it the Council also agrees a timetable for regular review by the Ministries Committee.

## A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR METHODIST MINISTERS

7. “Watching over one another in love” is the traditional hallmark of the Methodist experience and understanding of discipleship. It involves a freewill commitment to share in discerning God’s Spirit at work in the world through conferring with others; and a gracious offering of oneself to give and receive the fruits of that discernment so that all may grow in holiness (personal and social) and engage in worship and mission to the best of their ability.
8. In other words, it is the Methodist way of exercising oversight. It begins in the promises and commitments made in baptism, confirmation and becoming a member of the Methodist Church. Its classic expression spiritually is in the Covenant Service. Its classic embodiment practically is in Class and Band meetings (and their modern equivalents), and in the Conference (and its subsidiary meetings in local churches, circuits, districts and the wider Connexion).
9. The process of conferring and discerning always has to be open to the Spirit bringing new insights and fresh revelations of truth. But it also has to begin from somewhere; and it then needs to check that any apparent new insights are of God.
10. The primary starting point (or source of content) and checking point has always been the Bible. That is why the holiness being overseen is often termed “scriptural” holiness. The first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures set out the Torah: the story of God’s creative ordering of the universe and guidelines for how to live in harmony with its principles (hence better translated as ‘instruction’ than ‘law’). The biblical prophets then constantly take those principles and re-contextualise them in the light of changing historical circumstances. Similarly, the New Testament shows the early church taking the teachings of Jesus to his followers who were predominately Galileans, Jerusalemites or other people “of the land”, and re-applying them to Greek-speaking Jews from the diaspora, Samaritans and Gentiles throughout the Roman world.
11. Early Methodism, as the name suggests, developed its own method of pursuing holiness in worship and mission. That method involved developing guidelines and setting out aspirations and expectations which applied the insights of scripture to the lives of the people. These were often termed “Rules”, not in the sense of a legal code of commandments but of recommended standards for living and touchstones for reflection. It is as if, in emphasising “watching over one another in love”, Wesley saw the process of living by Rule as a means of grace (by which Wesley said he meant “*outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to [sc human beings] preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace*” and immediately went on to quote the *Book of Common Prayer’s* phrase “the means of grace and the hope of glory” before summarising the *Book of Common Prayer’s* definition of sacraments as ‘an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same’<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup>*Standard Sermons number XII* (number 16 in the more recent edition by Outler). In the same sermon he identified the chief of these means of grace as prayer (individual and communal); searching the Scriptures (by reading, hearing and meditating on them); and receiving the Lord’s Supper (regularly, and as often as possible). In the Minutes of the 1744 Conference, Wesley added two further ones: fasting; and Christian Conference (which we have more recently termed Christian Conferring). These five things Wesley sometimes called the ‘Institutional Means of Grace’, in that he found scriptural warrant for them. But he also recognised what he called ‘Prudential Means of Grace’ which, by their very definition could vary according to the people, contexts and situations concerned, but which were always directed towards “*watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God*”. These included following particular rules of life or engaging in particular acts of holy living.

12. Predominant among these rules for the early Methodists were *The Character of a Methodist* [1742]; *The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies* (which included the rules for the Class Meeting) [1743]; and *The Rules of the Bands* [1744].
13. Within the general calling of all the “people called Methodist” to “live by Rule”, there were focussed callings and Rules for those performing particular functions (eg “The Rules for Singing”) and fulfilling particular offices. Of particular relevance for our current concerns are the group of Anglican priests and lay preachers Wesley began to gather around him as his itinerant “Helpers” or “Assistants” with whom he held Conference. Over the years, and particularly as Methodism began to develop from being a movement within the Church of England to being a Church (and then Churches) in its own right, this group gradually developed into an order of ministers.
14. Wesley’s *Twelve Rules of a Helper* [1753, being a revised version of the *Rules of an Assistant* 1744] are therefore very important. They are clearly a Rule of Life. They are equally clearly a Code of Conduct.

The *Twelve Rules* and other sections relating to the office of Preachers and Pastors were among the material included in the compilations of the Minutes of the Conference that were known as the *Large Minutes* and revised and re-issued in 1753, 1763, 1770, 1772, 1780, and 1789. A copy of the *Large Minutes* or J S Simon's *Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline* which superseded them in 1905 was given to all those preachers and helpers who were received into full connexion with the Wesleyan Conference in the late 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The inscription in them (which persisted until Methodist Union in 1932) said “As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by, these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer”.

15. Further material was created in 1820 in what became known as the *Liverpool Minutes*. It was intended to supplement the *Twelve Rules of a Helper* and those other parts of the *Large Minutes* which related to the duties of Preachers and Pastors. It stated that both those documents should be read frequently and studied carefully. The new material was intended to re-apply their principles in the changed circumstances of “the present age” in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which included the first recorded reduction in membership of Wesleyan Methodism (although Primitive Methodism was growing exponentially in the same period, particularly in the Midlands). The results were a set of resolutions to which those in full connexion with the Conference committed themselves, with a view to achieving “... the increase of Spiritual Religion among our Societies and Congregations, and ... the extension of the work of God in our native country”. They too set out guidelines, and criteria by which performance could be supervised and evaluated.
16. These resolutions in the *Liverpool Minutes* were revised in 1885, and remained for many years as a blueprint for ministry. A new set of *Resolutions on Pastoral Work* were then adopted by the Conference in 1971. This occurred in a period when the context for ministry was changing rapidly, which led to a parallel set of theological restatements of the nature of ordained ministry. In 1960 there had been a statement on *Ordination in the Methodist Church* which was grounded in the major 1937 statement *The Nature of the Christian Church*. There were then reconsiderations of ordained ministry, both in the *Anglican-Methodist Conversations*, but also because of pressure to diversify the contexts in which ministry was exercised so that they included, for example, what were known as the ‘sectors’ as well as traditional circuit appointments. This led to the 1974 statement on *Ordination*.
17. Throughout all this period, and since, the important dynamic of “watching over one another in love” in ministry, and in exercising accountability and receiving support for it, has been expressed through weekly staff meetings; the response to the question asked during a

communion service at the Presbyteral Session of each District Synod (“Does each of us continue faithfully to discharge the obligations laid upon us by the ministry which we have received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God? Do we continue to believe and preach our doctrines and administer our discipline?”); and the answer of each district in the Presbyteral Session of the Conference to the Annual Inquiry about the character and discipline of presbyters and presbyteral probationers.

18. The whole process has been summed up in the Ordinal for Presbyters in the 1999 Methodist Worship Book. After outlining a number of tasks of presbyteral ministry under the heading “In God’s name you are to...” it goes on to say “These things are your common duty and delight. In them you are to watch over one another in love”.
19. Since the 1974 statement on *Ordination*, however, the Methodist Church has also closed the Wesley Deaconess Order, opened a Methodist Diaconal Order for both men and women, and declared that Order to be an order of ministry in the Church as well as a form of dispersed religious order. Although there are differences of emphasis between it and the presbyteral order (as two complementary orders of ministry) it inherits and shares the same tradition concerning rules of life, codes of conduct and “watching over one another in love”. The Methodist Diaconal Order has a clear (or specific) expectation and practice in these matters articulated in the sharing of a common rule of life. The declaration in the diaconal ordination service states that “You are to share fully in the life of your Order and to keep its discipline”. The sense of “watching over one another in love” is enacted in the area groups and through the Order’s Convocation. The annual inquiry as to the character and discipline of deacons and diaconal probationers is conducted through a rededication service at the Convocation, and assurances then given by the Warden of the Order on behalf of the Convocation to the Conference Diaconal Committee and, thereby, the Conference.
20. In the same period since 1974, the diversification in the ways that both presbyteral and diaconal ministry have been expressed has also posed questions about what commonality there could be within each order as well as between them, when, for example, not everyone could be in a weekly staff meeting, and also when the criteria for discernment of ministerial vocation were no longer self-evidently appropriate for all contexts. That led eventually to the report *What is a Presbyter?* adopted by the Conference in 2002, and *What is a Deacon?* in 2004. The former restates the definitive characteristic emphases of presbyteral ministry. It then concludes with three sections outlining The Characteristics of a Presbyter; The Tasks of a Presbyter; and The Accountability of a Presbyter (to God; to the Church; to ordained colleagues; and to others).
21. In recent years attention has been given to identifying criteria of competence and standards of practice, so that they can be used by the Church and its ministers in the process of discernment. The 2003 Conference approved *Criteria for the Selection of Candidates for Ordained Ministry* which were revised by the Conference of 2016. Attention has also been given to the tasks of ministry and in 2002 Conference adopted the report *Releasing Ministers for Ministry*. That report identified the need to discuss the life of the minister in three ways – the Office to which the minister is called (as Presbyter or Deacon) which has a fundamental character the main features of which are expressed in the words of the Ordinal; the Being of the minister, which we understand to mean the *habitus* by which the presbyter or deacon lives out her or his calling; the Functioning of the minister, ie the way in which the minister’s being manifests itself in the tasks of ministry.
22. It is to that last category that the stipulations of the Code of Conduct need to apply. In order to be clear that the Code relates to our fundamental understanding of what it is to be a presbyter or deacon, the *Code* is laid out according to the revised *Criteria for Selection* and the three dimensions identified in *Releasing Ministers for Ministry*. None of this will appear

unfamiliar to the presbyter or deacon who has nurtured her or his vocation and been faithful in watching over and being watched over in love. *What is a Presbyter?* reminded the Church that ministers are expected to behave “with integrity, competence and according to the best standards of practice towards those to whom she or he ministers.”

23. The *Code* therefore will remind ministers of the exemplary standards of behaviour which befit their calling as representative people. Occasionally, of course, ministers fail to live out their calling in the way that the Church reasonably expects them to do. Those who engage with such ministers in the processes of supervision approved by the Church, those who otherwise have oversight of them, and those who are recipients of their ministry, should find in the *Code* a canon against which (in)appropriate conduct and (in)competence can be identified and assessed.
24. Any *Code* will have to be consonant with the Supreme Court ruling about the status of Methodist ministers, and that will affect the way in which it is embedded in Standing Orders. Detailed proposals about this will be brought after consultation with the Law and Polity Committee to the Council in April 2017.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**18/1. The Council receives the report.**

**18/2. The Council commends the draft *Code* and asks that further work be done in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee on how it is to be incorporated in Standing Orders.**

**18/3. The Council recommends that the *Code* be reviewed at least every five years by the Ministries Committee.**

Draft Code of Conduct

	The Office	Being	Functioning
<b>Vocation (call and commitment)</b>	‘It is the universal conviction of the Methodist people that the office of Christian ministry depends upon the call of God’. <sup>2</sup> Throughout the process of candidating and training, men and women are tested on their call and asked if they remain persuaded that God has called them to ordained ministry in the Church. That call to ordained ministry is a particular expression of the vocation to discipleship which is shared by all members of the Church. Those ordained as presbyters and deacons ‘focus, express, and enable the ministry of the whole people of God.’ <sup>3</sup>	Presbyters and deacons are people who witness to a sense of a distinct call to serve in the ministry to which they are ordained; and who are aware of the need continually to ask to what they are being called and to test the development of their call with others in the Church. They live with a conviction that for them the call to be a presbyter or deacon is part of and indispensable to the call to holiness which is common to all disciples but which finds different expression in each; this vocation however is not individualistic but is tested and affirmed by the community of disciples. Ministers therefore seek to discern their developing vocation (eg, at times of stationing) in dialogue with the Church and its processes.	All ministers should demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a willingness to give an account of the call to minister;</li> <li>• preparedness to explore the developing sense of call with others (eg, spiritual director, minister exercising oversight, supervisor);</li> <li>• commitment to affirm each year a continued sense of call to the ordained ministry of Christ’s Church;</li> <li>• a recognition that the call to minister is discerned by the individual and by the Church together: and therefore</li> <li>• a commitment to listen carefully to the narratives of vocation that others have to offer;</li> <li>• a recognition that their own vocation needs constantly to be reviewed in the light of the Church’s needs in serving God’s mission in the world;</li> <li>• obedience and commitment to the Church’s processes of discernment and stationing.</li> </ul>
<b>Vocation (ministry in the MCB)</b>	Whilst the Methodist Church claims to ordain ‘not to a denomination, but to the presbyterate and diaconate of the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church’, Methodist presbyters and deacons	Deacons are people whose calling is to focus a servant ministry on behalf of the whole Church by enabling the ministry of others. They are required to live according to the <i>Diaconal Order’s Rule of Life</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A commitment to work collaboratively with other ordained and lay members of the Church.</li> <li>• Participation (as required by Standing Orders) in regular Circuit staff meetings (or equivalent body) as an expression of collegiality and shared</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Deed of Union cl4

<sup>3</sup>What is a Presbyter? paragraph 4.

	exercise ministry within and as representatives of the Methodist Church in Britain.	Presbyters are called to a 'principal and directing part' in the life of the Church through the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral responsibility.	<p>leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A respect for the significance and integrity of the ministry of the other order.</li> <li>• An understanding and appropriate use of the power implicit in the role of minister and an acceptance of accountability for the exercise of the office.</li> <li>• For presbyters, a commitment to 'watch over one another in love' through attendance at and participation in the Presbyteral Synod and through less formal gatherings.</li> <li>• For deacons, a commitment to life as members of the Methodist Diaconal Order</li> <li>• A recognition that the conduct of the minister at all times should be that of a representative of the Methodist Church.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship with God</b>	Presbyters and deacons are first and foremost people of prayer. Presbyters and deacons commit themselves at ordination to 'be faithful in worship, in prayer, [and] in the reading of the Holy Scriptures.' <sup>4</sup>	Ministers need to nurture a spiritual life that is authentic and disciplined and which is based on a confidence in God's love for them and a sense of the call to perfect holiness. This spiritual life will be manifest in regular engagement with the means of grace in private devotion and in the life of the worshipping community. As for all Methodist disciples, this will include participation in public worship, regular communion, and prayer and Bible study in small groups. Ministers need to be those who are able to receive as well as to give in worship, fellowship, pastoral care, and mission.	<p>All ministers should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a regular and disciplined life of personal prayer;</li> <li>• a commitment to the worship of the Church including times when they are not leading worship;</li> <li>• a form of accountability (eg, to a spiritual director) for their life of prayer.</li> </ul> <p>Deacons are in addition committed to the Daily Office of the Order and to its common rule of life</p>

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<sup>4</sup>Methodist Worship Book p303/318

<p><b>Personality and character</b></p>	<p>‘This ministry will make great demands upon you.’<sup>5</sup> The model is the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. Therefore, the life of the ministers can be spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically demanding. As those who live on the resources of the Church, freely shared by other disciples, ministers are those who are prepared to live within modest means whilst at the same time being called to demonstrate the generosity that imitates the generosity of Christ.</p>	<p>Ministers need to develop and to maintain the resources to face these demands. They need to understand their own limitations and vulnerability, and recognise their dependence on and experience of grace. They need to care for themselves, and to have the capacity to engage with and to work on areas of perceived weakness. Presbyters and deacons should live as those for whom the church has provided with a modesty that avoids both extravagance and parsimony. They should conduct their own financial affairs with probity and appropriate transparency.</p> <p>As representative people they are duty bound to demonstrate the care for the environment and conservation of the resources of the planet that expresses the Church’s concern for the integrity of creation.</p> <p>Ministers live and work within the Church’s policy that all ministers should operate under supervision.</p>	<p>All ministers should demonstrate a care for their own physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing through such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintaining reasonable working hours</li> <li>• taking regular days off and holidays</li> <li>• seeking treatment and resting when unwell</li> <li>• accepting the gift of the sabbatical at appropriate times</li> </ul> <p>In terms of their income, all ministers should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep accurate records of all receipts of gifts or other monies in addition to their stipend, salary, or pension</li> <li>• abide by the Church’s policies in relation to occasional fees, gifts, and gratuities.</li> </ul> <p>All ministers should be prudent in the use of material resources by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• careful management of their own finances and other means;</li> <li>• living in and taking care of the manse with which they are provided<sup>6</sup></li> </ul> <p>All ministers shall operate under the supervision policy of the church by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting regularly with a supervisor</li> <li>• sharing honestly with the supervisor the tensions and joys of their ministry</li> <li>• making effective use of the supervisory space to reflect on their ministry with a view to</li> </ul>
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<sup>5</sup>Methodist Worship Book p302/317

<sup>6</sup> Unless in exceptional circumstances permission has been given not to live in the manse.

			<p>improving their practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agreeing records of supervision</li> <li>• accepting responsibility for the outcomes of supervision</li> </ul>
<b>Being in relationship with others</b>	<p>All ministry is relational and should reflect the loving communion of three persons that is God the Holy Trinity.<sup>7</sup> Both presbyters and deacons are called to have ‘unfailing love’ for those amongst whom they minister.</p> <p>Ministers are human beings who live in relationship with others and are expected to live in accordance with the church’s policies and statements on marriage, family life, and other relationships. All ministers have other vocations (eg, to be spouses or partners, parents, children, siblings, friends, or neighbours) and are called prayerfully to balance their responsibilities to those close to them with the demands of their ministry in and on behalf of the Church.</p>	<p>Ministers need to recognize themselves as whole people who are called to balance the various commitments to those whom they are called to love.</p> <p>Ministers should be conversant with and live openly in accord with the guidelines on sexual relationships offered by the Conference in 1993.</p> <p>Presbyters and deacons should model good, wholesome, and loving relationships and demonstrate discretion in the use of physical contact or expressions of intimacy.</p> <p>The conduct of the minister should be that of a loving servant who is called to live among those whom she or he may find it easy or difficult to like.</p> <p>All human relationships have dimensions of power and vulnerability. Ministers should be alert to these and cautious of any words or actions that could be interpreted as an abuse of their power.</p> <p>Ministers need to be conversant with and to advocate for the Church’s policies and practices in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.</p>	<p>All ministers should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live faithfully in their domestic situation</li> <li>• Be swift to seek help with and share with the minister exercising oversight serious difficulties in or likely breakup of their relationship</li> <li>• Be careful to identify and to maintain appropriate boundaries in pastoral relationships</li> <li>• Conduct all their pastoral work in accordance with the Church’s directions in <i>With Integrity</i> and <i>Skill</i> and <i>Positive Working Together</i></li> <li>• Be conversant with and follow the stipulations in the Church’s Safeguarding policies about the conduct of pastoral work</li> <li>• Keep accurate and meaningful records of pastoral visits and encounters</li> <li>• Refer to supervision any relationship that might threaten to cross the boundaries of professional, pastoral care.</li> </ul>
<b>The Church’s</b>	Ministers are called to lead God’s people	All ministers (whether in circuit or other	All ministers should seek to work ecumenically and

<sup>7</sup>What is a Deacon? paragraph 2

<p><b>ministry in God's world</b></p>	<p>in mission to the world. They are those in whom gifts have been identified which contribute to the fulfilling of the mission of the Church. They are therefore those whose lives are shaped by the calling of the Church to worship, learning and caring, service, and evangelism and who seek to reflect theologically on the Church's vocation in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.</p>	<p>appointments or without appointment and in all aspects of their ministry) are called to work ecumenically to reflect the Methodist Church's understanding of the catholicity of the Church as God's instrument of mission in the world.</p> <p>Theological reflection is central to the life of the presbyter or deacon. He or she will seek to be informed about the world and to ask where God is at work. Within the broad understanding of what it means to be God's people in this place and time, each minister will develop his or her own theological and other interests and aim to contribute to the life and witness of the Church in particular ways, proclaiming the good news of God's love in ways that are appropriate to their context.</p> <p>Their political opinions should be informed by the use of reliable and authoritative media. It is wholly inappropriate for ministers to be members of any movements that implicitly or explicitly deny the equality of all God's children.</p>	<p>should therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop partnerships with members of other churches working with the guidance of Connexional and District officers as and when appropriate</li> <li>• Speak respectfully of Christians of other denominations and of members of other faith communities.</li> </ul> <p>All ministers should engage with social issues in ways that make clear Christ's compassion Whilst ministers are free to hold and to express party political views they should avoid doing so in ways that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denigrate the opinions or motivations of others within the political mainstream</li> <li>• Adopt language or articulate attitudes that are in any way discriminatory or liable to incite hatred or inflame tensions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership and collaboration</b></p>	<p>The call to presbyteral ministry is a call to 'a principal and directing part in [the] great duties [of the Church]';<sup>8</sup> the call to the diaconate is to 'represent the servanthood of Christ, exercising a formal role of leadership in the</p>	<p>Ministers need to have an ability to work with others in a variety of ways. They should be those who work collaboratively with their lay and ordained colleagues in the leadership of churches, circuits, or other bodies to which they are stationed. They should be able to</p>	<p>All ministers should (as set out in Standing Orders or as required in order to implement them) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and contribute to the meetings of which they are members</li> <li>• Participate in Circuit staff meetings (or the equivalent body) as an expression of collegiality</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Deed of Union cl4

	<p>Church'.<sup>9</sup>Both presbyters and deacons are called to 'accept our discipline and work together with... sisters and brothers in the Church'.<sup>10</sup> This requires an appropriate degree of both humility and confidence in the way in which leadership is exercised.</p>	<p>delegate to others when appropriate. Ministry in the Methodist Church at times also requires the presbyter or deacon to be able to act decisively on the part of the church, circuit, or other body and therefore to hold an appropriate understanding of her or his own authority.</p> <p><i>The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church</i> orders, regulates, and guides, the work of those who exercise leadership in the life of the Church and all presbyters and deacons are expected to be familiar with its contents.</p> <p>The Covenant relationship is one in which the presbyter or deacon is called to represent the Conference within and beyond the Church. Particularly in the public arena, ministers should uphold the decisions of the Conference and express personal disagreement with those decisions in a manner which is collegial and respectful of the Conference and its officers, demonstrating 'a willingness to work with a dynamic tension of diversity, recognising that openness does not mean that 'anything goes' but is a desire to discern God's will in and for the other and the Church.'<sup>11</sup></p>	<p>and shared leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with others to ensure that meetings in the life of the Church are properly constituted, effectively administered, and functionally efficient.</li> <li>• Keep records of their own ministry and hold themselves accountable to their colleagues as appropriate.</li> <li>• Chair and contribute to meetings in ways which clearly encourage all present to express opinions and model respectful listening.</li> <li>• Consult (and act only in accordance with) the Standing Orders, Regulations, and Guidance contained in CPD when deciding on or implementing any course of action.</li> <li>• Demonstrate a respect for the decisions of the Conference and the work of its officers.</li> <li>• Seek in the first instance privately to raise with their minister exercising oversight any concerns that they feel about decisions of the Conference or the actions of its officers, and to follow the Church's formal Grievance Procedures about any outstanding issues.</li> <li>• Encourage those with whom they share in ministry to help to implement the decisions of the Conference</li> <li>• Eschew words or actions that seek to undermine the authority of the Conference or to cast aspersions on the effectiveness or</li> </ul>
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<sup>9</sup> What is a Deacon? 7.3

<sup>10</sup> MWB p303, 318

<sup>11</sup> 'Living with Contradictory Convictions'

			<p>motivations of others who exercise leadership in the life of the Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe appropriate codes of confidentiality adopted or recommended by the Conference or otherwise approved by bodies authorised to act on its behalf.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning and understanding</b>	<p>Presbyters and deacons are required to undertake duties on behalf of the Church in which it is essential that they can explicitly and lucidly articulate the doctrines of the Christian faith to those who have received the gospel and to those who are yet to receive it. They are also required to engage in the practice of ministry which must be informed by an understanding of the great truths of the Faith and an ability to reflect theologically using a range of resources.</p>	<p>Presbyters and deacons should see themselves as lifelong learners who are constantly engaged in theological reflection. Their regular life should include dedicated times of study, engagement with Scripture and theological texts, and participation in study activities. It is recommended that all ministers identify their own theological interests and pursue them. Ministers should also explore and develop their interests in other avenues of knowledge. Presbyters and deacons will also be those who want to engage with a range of cultural pursuits and activities.</p>	<p>All ministers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a programme of Bible reading</li> <li>• Maintain habits of study and avail themselves of the resources of the Church in developing their skills of theological reflection;</li> <li>• Identify and pursue particular areas of theological and other study;</li> <li>• Keep a record of their reading and engagements with other media, review it regularly and share the fruits of their learning appropriately with others in the church.</li> <li>• Participate in the study opportunities offered by the circuit, district, or connexion when possible</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<p>Much of ministry is concerned with speaking on behalf of God to people within and outside the Church. To articulate the truths of the Christian faith demands the skills of communication. Ministers are those who are constantly learning how to speak with clarity and passion about the Good News of Christ.</p>	<p>Ministers need to be aware of the different methods of communication that are available to them and of the importance of using different methods to speak to people with different learning styles and abilities. Ministers need to be alert to cultural differences and to those who do not find written or spoken English easy. Ministers should be aware of the opportunities and the perils of information technology and social media and be conversant with and careful about using modern methods of communication. Ministers should Remember</p>	<p>All ministers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise their communication skills in their professional development and seek regular feedback on their preaching and other forms of public communication</li> <li>• Be familiar with information technology and be prepared to communicate using it.</li> <li>• Avoid the use of any language or imagery (eg, blasphemous, racial or sexual terms) that would be found offensive.</li> <li>• Be conversant with and abide by the Church's guidance on the Use of Social Media.</li> </ul>

		that whenever they communicate they do so as those who represent the Methodist Church and therefore be careful about what they say, the words that they use to say it, and how it might be repeated and interpreted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not use pseudonyms or anonymity to say that which they would not be willing to publish over their name.</li><li>• Avoid any association with printed, broadcast, or Internet material that has gratuitously sexual or violent content.</li></ul>
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## Index of existing guidelines and standards

### 1. What are ministers expected to do / be?

- The ordinal (*The Methodist Worship Book*, pp. 297-328)
- Clause 4 of the Deed of Union – [http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483\\_conf\\_2015\\_cpd\\_vol\\_2.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483_conf_2015_cpd_vol_2.pdf) (pp. 213-214)
- Criteria for the selection of candidates for ordained ministry (2003) – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1679593/dev-per-selection-criteriafor-ordained-ministry-19062012.pdf> (revised 2016: <http://methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2016-24-Methodist-Council-part-2.pdf>)
- Expected competencies at the point of stationing and ordination (found in the *Handbook for Ministerial Probation* – <http://methodist.org.uk/media/1767780/handbook-for-probation-2015.pdf>)
- The Methodist Diaconal Order Rule of Life – [http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483\\_conf\\_2015\\_cpd\\_vol\\_2.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483_conf_2015_cpd_vol_2.pdf) (pp. 743-744)
- *Ordination* (1974) – [http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith\\_and\\_Order\\_Statements\\_Vol1\\_0409.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith_and_Order_Statements_Vol1_0409.pdf) (beginning on p. 108)
- *The Ministry of the People of God* (1988) – [http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith\\_and\\_Order\\_Statements\\_Vol2\\_Part1\\_0409.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith_and_Order_Statements_Vol2_Part1_0409.pdf) (beginning on p. 229)
- *The Methodist Diaconal Order* (1993) – [http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith\\_and\\_Order\\_Statements\\_Vol2\\_Part1\\_0409.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith_and_Order_Statements_Vol2_Part1_0409.pdf) (beginning on p. 291)
- *Called to Love and Praise* (1999) – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-called-to-love-and-praise-1999.pdf>
- *Releasing Ministers for Ministry* (2002) - <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-releasing-ministers-for-ministry-2002.pdf>
- *What is a Presbyter?* (2002) – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-what-is-a-presbyter-2002.pdf>

- *What is a Deacon?* (2004) – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/879666/dev-perwhat-is-a-deacon-2004-15062012.pdf>
- *The Nature of Oversight* (2005) – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/conference/conference-reports/2005-reports>
- *The Covenant Relationship for those who are Ordained and in Full Connexion* (2008) – <http://methodist.org.uk/conference/conference-reports/2008-reports>

## 2. How are they expected to do / be this?

- With regard to ways of working: *Flexible Patterns of Ministry* (1999) – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-flexible-patterns-of-ministry-1999.pdf>
- With regard to confidentiality: *With Integrity and Skill* (2008) – [http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf08\\_18\\_With\\_Integrity\\_and\\_Skill.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf08_18_With_Integrity_and_Skill.pdf)
- With regard to development: Ministerial Development Review – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/leadership-and-ministry/ministerial-development-review>
- With regard to conflict and positive working together – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1726656/positive-working-together-long-report-0615.pdf>
- With regard to online presence and behaviour: Social media guidelines – [www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/technology-and-church/social-media-guidelines](http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/technology-and-church/social-media-guidelines)
- With regard to Safeguarding: Policy (<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/methodist-safeguarding-policy>) plus the learning and recommendations from the Past Cases Review (2015) (<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1683823/past-cases-review-2013-2015-final.pdf>)

## 3. Guidelines and standards regulating the life of the Church as a whole

- Legislation (eg the Equality Act 2010 – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/equality-and-diversity/legislation>)
- Standing Orders (see 700 and 701 for ordained presbyteral and diaconal ministry) – [http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483\\_conf\\_2015\\_cpd\\_vol\\_2.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483_conf_2015_cpd_vol_2.pdf)