

Proposal to change status of the Churches Ministerial Counselling Service

Contact Name and Details	Linda Robotham, Wellbeing Adviser robothaml@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action Required	Discussion and decision
Resolutions	<p>19/1 The Council receives the report.</p> <p>19/2. The Council approves the conversion of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS) to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).</p> <p>19/3. The Council approves the continuing use of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service, following the review undertaken of the level of usage and costs of sharing in the service.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	<p>To highlight the proposed changes in the status of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service to one of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.</p> <p>To identify that a review of the usage and costing of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service has been undertaken.</p>
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	<p>The Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS) is a service that was set up with a number of denominations including the Methodist Church in 1999 to provide counselling service to ministers and their households.</p> <p>The service is administered by the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB). The Methodist Church makes a contribution to the running costs on a monthly basis, plus an additional amount dependent upon the number of ministers and counselling sessions undertaken.</p> <p>The service has grown considerably since 1999 to the extent that it is not feasible to remain in its present state and it is now proposed that it become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). By becoming a CIO, CMCS has the opportunity to develop further with a trustee board, with its own legal identity and with limited liability.</p>
Consultations	Ministries Committee, Wellbeing Adviser, Director of Learning for Ministry, Procurement Manager and Ministries team leader Baptist Union of Great Britain

Proposal to change status of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS)

- 1.0 This report went before the Ministries Committee in September 2020 and the resolutions passed were as follows:
- The Committee recommends that the Methodist Council approve the conversion of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service to one of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
 - The Committee directs the Ministries Team in consultation with the Wellbeing Adviser and the Procurement Manager to review the level of usage and costs of sharing in the CMCS and to report to the Methodist Council.
- 1.1 The Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS) is a service that was set up with a number of denominations including the Methodist Church in 1999 to provide counselling service to ministers and their households. A steering group was formed with all the denominations having a representative from the professionals within their denominations (counsellors) and administration. The wellbeing adviser is a part of the steering group and attached are the terms of reference for the group.
- 1.2 The steering group meets 4 times a year to discuss the ongoing operations of the counselling services. Issues include usage of the service, training programme provided for counsellors, relevant changes in law for policy development, considering new denominations who wish to join. In addition a few sub groups have been developed from the main steering group, such as a finance sub group and training group.
- 1.3 The service is administered by the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB). The Methodist Church pays some running costs to the Baptist Union every month and then an additional amount dependent upon the number of ministers and counselling sessions undertaken.
- 1.4 Over the years the work of CMCS has grown with client numbers increasing substantially in recent years. The Baptist Union and the Methodist Church have become the biggest users of the service.

2.0 Charitable status

- 2.1 There were initial discussions in 2017 regarding changing the status of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service and it is now proposed that it become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- 2.2 The argument is that by becoming a CIO, CMCS has the opportunity to develop further with a trustee board which is committed to enabling the charity to serve a wider range of church networks and denominations. As more groups/denominations seek to use the service the steering group grows larger and becomes more expensive and unwieldy. This structure enables CMCS to engage with the members as necessary, but then leaves the day to day running of the service to a smaller group of trustees who are seeking to provide that quality service for the members.
- 2.3 The rationale for CMCS becoming a CIO is to give it a legal identity of its own and to limit liability. As things stand CMCS does not have its own charitable status, and while it has a steering group made up of the representatives of the denominations and dioceses involved, there is a lack of clarity as to where the final liability lies. The Trustees of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) are uncomfortable about carrying the liability. As they handle all the finances and provide the staff to administer the service, it is generally assumed that the liability probably rests with BUGB.

- 2.4 There are some decisions that are only relevant to the counselling representatives, some only to the denominations and some for all steering group members. This decision regarding charitable status can only be made by the denominations. In addition as the biggest contributors and users of the service if a CIO is going to be formed and continue with CMCS, then it needs the commitment of the Methodist Church and BUGB, as either of the denominations dropping out will make it unviable.
- 2.5 Advice was sought from the legal team within the Methodist Church, Edwina Turner of Anthony Collins solicitors and the Secretary of the Conference as to whether this proposal is a valid one that the Methodist Church should support. All have commented that the proposal is the logical route to take but formal authorisation is required.
- 2.6 As mentioned above the BUGB have administered this service since the start but as there is a proposal to change the status there were also discussions around the finances of the service itself, the cost effectiveness and in our view whether it is fit for purpose.
- 2.7 There are two main issues identified should the status change to that of a CIO. Firstly, the share system that was used when the service was first set up and then adapted as others have joined showed a massive discrepancy between usage of the service and contributions of the members. The other was that as the service has grown the budget has not reflected the true cost of running it. The implications for the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union (as the major users of the service by some margin) were more significant than for any other members.
- 2.8 The question was raised as to whether there are other ways in which the service can run much more efficiently, or even whether the objective of providing counselling can now be achieved by the members more cost effectively in other ways.
- 2.9 There was a concern that the administrative cost of providing counselling for ministers and their families is disproportionately high, and there was a question as to whether the value added justifies the cost in an age where counselling is much more readily accessible than it was when CMCS started.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The Ministries Committee in September considered the request for a review of the services of CMCS to ascertain whether it is fit for purpose and/or consider an equivalent service like an employee assistance programme for ministers and their families.
- 3.2 A meeting took place with a Wellbeing Adviser, Director of Learning for Ministry, Procurement Manager and Head of Ministries from the Baptist Union of Great Britain in September 2020 with a view to looking at usage and costing arrangements which were fair and equitable. It was decided that the costing arrangement would be amended to reflect an average uptake of the service per potential user. This would be fairer to all denominations so that those denominations with few members would not pay the same costing as others with larger number of members. In addition this would be based on a 3 year average for use of the service.
- 3.3 This would mean that the administration costs of running the service currently administered by the BUGB would be spread across the denominations instead of the BUGB bearing the brunt of the costs.
- 3.4 It was considered that a total upheaval of the service and procurement of a new service in these challenging times would not benefit the Methodist Church and could cause undue disruptions for users of the service. The amended costing arrangements were deemed fair and the view was that we wish to continue with the current service with the amended costing arrangements.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 19/1. The Council receives the report.**
- 19/2. The Council approves the conversion of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS) to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).**
- 19/3. The Council approves the continuing use of the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service, following the review undertaken of the level of usage and costs of sharing in the service.**

Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STEERING GROUP

Agreed by the Steering Group on 24 February 2014

The Steering Group (the Group) was formed by the Founding Denominations in the Procedural Guidelines which they agreed on 4 May 1999, and the main purposes of the Group are to:

- Manage the business of The Churches Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS).
- Appoint and delegate powers to sub committees and officers whilst remaining liable for the acts of those committees and individuals.
- Provide strategic direction by:
 - establishing and maintaining appropriate aims and ethos;
 - creating and evaluating long term strategic development plans.
- Consider applications for membership of CMCS from denominations or other Christian bodies within the terms of the Procedural Guidelines and if approved appoint as full members or members with affiliated status.
- Appoint and line-manage a Service Co-ordinator (Administrator) to administer the day-to-day activities of the Service.
- Agree the number of and appoint, counselling Consultants from a range of denominations to oversee the clinical work within the Service.
- Appoint Area Co-ordinators who will link clients with counsellors and administer this process.
- Determine the suitability criteria for the registration of counsellors.
- Appoint and maintain a register of counsellors.
- Appoint other officers as may be necessary.
- Ensure that personal details are retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1989 and that counselling confidentiality is maintained throughout the service
- Expend such funds as are appropriate for the smooth running of the Service.
- Ensure that a proper accounting system is maintained and audited, and that a comprehensive financial report is regularly considered by the Group..
- Ensure that a budget is prepared and adopted for each financial year..
- Ensure that annual financial and activity reports are submitted to each subscribing denomination.
- Effect and pay for liability insurance covering members of the Group, and others as considered appropriate by the Group whilst they are engaged in CMCS activities.
- Effect and pay for such other insurance that the Group considers appropriate to safeguard the assets and activities of CMCS.
- Enter into agreements on behalf of CMCS.
- Adopt and review policies and procedures for the fulfilment of all statutory duties and the smooth running of the Service.
- Facilitate appropriate training to meet identified needs for those operating within the Service and determine funding arrangements for such training.

Membership

The Steering Group will consist of;

- A maximum of two representatives of each full member body (as detailed in section 2 of the Procedural Guidelines)

Co-option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Consultants (as detailed in section 2 of the Procedural Guidelines) • An Area Co-ordinator (subject to a 2 year, renewable term) • The Service Co-ordinator may be appointed as a full voting member of the Group. • The Group may choose to co-opt suitably qualified or experienced individuals to the Group, subject to the number of denominational representatives on the Group exceeding all other members by at least one. (subject to a 2 year, renewable term) • The Steering Group may choose to co-opt qualified or experienced individuals to any sub-committee as non-voting members. (subject to a 2 year term)
Quorum	A minimum of 50% of the voting members of the Group which must include at least one Consultant.
Chair	<p>The Group will appoint a Chair who will hold office for two years and will be eligible to stand for one further term.</p> <p>The Group may elect a Vice-Chair who will hold office for two years and will be eligible to stand for one further term.</p> <p>Either the Chair or Vice Chair must be a Consultant.</p>
Decision Making	The Group will aim for consensus when making decisions but where issues are put to the vote a simple majority of voting members present at the meeting will apply. When a vote results in a tie, the Chair has one additional casting vote.
Meetings	<p>The Group will meet at least three times each year and at other times as required. Meetings will normally be held in person, but may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the Group.</p> <p>Draft agendas will be released two weeks before each meeting and the final agendas and papers will be circulated electronically a week prior to each meeting.</p>
Minute Taker	The Service Co-ordinator will minute each meeting. If the Service Co-ordinator is not available a minute-taker must be appointed by the meeting. Draft minutes should be circulated within 28 days of the meeting.
Reporting	All decisions will be minuted and reported to the next Group meeting.
Review Arrangement	Terms of Reference and membership of the Group and any sub-committees will be reviewed as necessary but changes can only be made by agreement at a meeting of the Group.