



Thames North Synod

19th November 2016

Deployment Policy

Paper C

Interim Deployment Policy

Preamble:

The URC firmly believes in the ministry of all God's people (both lay and ordained) within which a Minister of Word and Sacraments plays a specific role. The amount of paid ministry available to the Synod is currently strictly limited. The lay-ministry must be encouraged and supported. As the demands on, and nature of, ministry change, we must ask ourselves 'what the ordained ministers are for'.

In the synod's new structure, each church in the local area groups will be served by ministry which may include lay-leaders, lay-preachers, elders and stipendiary, non-stipendiary and where appropriate, retired ministers. The sharing of ministry across the churches and synod posts it intended be fair, strategic and flexible, responding to diverse situations and achieving the synod's agreed goals.

The Deployment Policy is concerned with the distribution of stipendiary ministry supporting the local churches and synod's special ministries through the process of calling and appointment.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Synod deployment policy is to provide a Synod agreed framework in which decisions about deployment of stipendiary ministry can be made by Pastoral Committee. The policy should be reviewed periodically by the Pastoral Committee.

What does it cover?

- The Pastoral Committee determines the deployment of the stipendiary ministry through scoping and declaring vacancies.
- The Pastoral Committee has the remit to define/agree local area groups
- The Pastoral Committee cannot influence the number of ministers allocated to Thames North (only the denomination's Ministries Committee can do that)
- The Pastoral Committee cannot determine the availability of other forms of leadership but it will encourage it, and also support a coordinated approach to lay and ordained ministry.

What the synod is trying to achieve?

- To make sure that the limited ministerial resources are placed strategically where they can best serve the kingdom.
- To help our ministers think clearly about why they are exercising their ministry in the particular context where they are placed and to help them to develop team approach.

- To encourage all churches and their members to think clearly about why they are asking for and receiving ministry, and also to encourage them to function as a group.

Some principles:

- The churches will work together in the local area groups to mutually support the ministry and mission of each church and beyond as appropriate.
- Every church in the local area groups will normally have a named Minister in pastoral charge. Every church will have a “minimum support” of a Minister calculated by an agreed formula which would apply. During vacancy, every effort will be made to provide a lower support (which is 10% scoping). In certain situations the lay-ministry will be an appropriate option.
- The total of the agreed minimum shared across the Synod should *total* be no more than 80% of its allocation from Ministries. The remaining allocation would be deployed by Pastoral Committee according to priorities agreed by the Synod.
- The scoping for additional ministry to the churches will be based on strategic and potential mission/ministry for which the local area groups can make a case to Pastoral Committee. The provision of this ministry will be mainly by appointment for a flexible period but no more than five years at a time with a periodic review of the ministry. This is to ensure the stewardship of limited resources.

Further guidelines:

- Given the ratio of the number of ministers and the churches across the Synod and the URC, a minister would normally serve more than one *pastorate* church or a *pastorate* church with other Synod responsibilities except where Pastoral Committee decides otherwise for strategic reasons.
- The norm should be creation of full time pastoral charges covering sufficient churches to enable the deployment of ministry. It is recognised that in certain situations part-time pastoral charges will be an appropriate response at that point in time.
- The formula for calculating the *minimal* minimum deployed ministry takes into account number of members, contribution to Ministry & Mission Fund and number of churches in a pastorate in a proportion to be agreed by the synod.
- The LEPs will normally be included in the local area groups. However, certain scoping will be reserved for the LEPs for strategic or exceptional situations.
- The number of pastoral charges covering the whole Synod should equal the Thames North allocation from ministries. (comment: this takes no account of the use of ministerial resources for synod posts such as the Training Officer)
- As our deployment number changes this may require adjustment to the ministers allocated to the local area groups.

Notes:

1. The 10% minimum ministerial support (by an ordained or lay-person) to a church is intended to include: leading the service quarterly; chairing elders meeting; and chairing or attending

Church Meeting as appropriate. There should be flexibility to plan this locally. The percentage is primarily for the purpose of expenses claim. The minimum support is about the quality of attention rather than the actual time spend.

2. The non-stipendiary and retired ministers (if appropriate) are appointed by Pastoral Committee in consultation with the LA. In most cases, within a suitable distance from the pastorate. The appointment of lay-ministry comes under the remit of Pastoral Committee. The Pastoral committee intends to prepare suitable policies on these other sources of ministry and aims to take a coordinated approach to affirm the 'ministry of all God's people'.

Glossary

- Church – a single local worshipping community, usually on one site.
- Pastorate – normally, this is a group of local churches, sharing ministry and mission. Each church continues its own activities (house groups, youth work, etc) and to have its own Elders and Church Meetings but also has joint Church and Elders meetings according to a pattern the member churches have agreed.
In the current deployment circumstances, it is very unlikely but possible that a pastorate could consist of only one church.
- Local Area Group – a group of, normally, 10-15 local churches in pastorates (usually 2-3) combined to enable mission and growth, all of which have agreed to a memorandum of understanding. There is a steering group on which each church is represented and a ministerial team of the lay and ordained ministry in the group, both of which meet regularly.
- Vacant/vacancy there are different understandings and misunderstandings of these terms. Technically a pastorate is declared vacant or in vacancy by the Pastoral Committee at the request of the Steering Group when content all necessary procedures are in place and documents available. Following this the summary details are added to the "Vacancy list" for the Moderators' Meeting and made available to all serving ministers by circulation to them each month with notification of payment of stipend. It is the addition of the word "declared" that defines whether a pastorate is simply without ordained ministry or open to ministers seeking a pastorate to ask to view the profile and, if interested in the vacancy, seek an introduction. This is done via the Moderators' Meeting.