

The General Assembly  
of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches  
Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex Street, Strand,  
London, WC2R 3HY

**GUIDELINES**  
*for*  
**PARTNERSHIP**  
*between*  
**CONGREGATIONS**  
*and*  
**MINISTERS**



Draft 2022 – currently under review in section

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

Churches' Legislation Advisory Service	Inter-denominational group that speaks with government departments
Chief Officer	Principal administrator of the GA
Colleges	UCM – Unitarian College, Manchester HMCO – Harris Manchester College, Oxford
District Association	13 regional church groupings in England, 2 in Wales and 1 in Scotland
Essex Hall	Unitarian National Headquarters 1-6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY
Executive Committee	8 elected members plus GA Treasurer. The principal policy making body and trustees of the GA
GA Rolls	Lists kept by the GA of persons recognised for specific leadership positions or status
GA Quota	An annual charge levied by the GA on member congregations based on declared membership numbers.
General Assembly (GA)	General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
IARF	International Association for Religious Freedom
ICUU	International Council of Unitarians and Universalists
Interview Panel	Appointed by the Ministry Commission to select students for training, to monitor progress, and recommend status
Lay Pastor	Someone who, by specific training, meets the criteria for admission to the Role of Ministers and Lay Pastors
Lay Worship Leader	
Minister	Someone who satisfies the GA criteria for admission to the Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors
Ministry Commission	Committee appointed by the Executive Committee
Ministerial Fellowship	The Unitarian Ministerial Fellowship – the professional association of Unitarian ministers on the role of the General Assembly
MCSO	Ministerial and Congregational Support Officer at GA
MPF	Ministers' Pension Fund
Stipend Review Panel	A panel appointed to recommend to the Annual Meetings ministerial stipends, housing allowance

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

	and other expenses
Sustentation Fund	Makes grants towards the stipends of ministers
UALL	Unitarian Association of Lay Leaders
UUA	Unitarian Universalist Association (of America)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 These Guidelines are intended to serve as a pointer to best practice in minister/congregation relationships. They are written for congregations, committees, ministers and all concerned in trying to create healthy, co-operative and fair religious communities.

1.2 They are based on accumulated experience, on current practice in other professions, and, in part, on previous Guidelines which have been issued by the General Assembly.

1.3 The intention of the guidelines is to provide helpful and practical suggestions in matters of attitude and procedure for all stages of ministry. By so doing, fairness and consistency for all concerned should be achieved. No matter how scrupulously these guidelines are observed, an effective relationship between congregation and minister must still be grounded in mutual trust and respect. To this end the maintenance of adequate active and free communication should be a shared primary concern.

1.4 Misunderstandings and disagreements do occur. In the Guidelines an attempt is made to do two things in particular: firstly, to suggest ways of proceeding that will remove as many as possible of the situations that cause problems, and secondly, when problems do occur, to suggest ways in which these can be faced and dealt with.

1.5 In their dealings with one another, ministers and members of congregations/groups should remember that when the differences and misunderstandings are resolved they will have to work together amicably once again. Every effort should be made to ensure that situations do not provoke the bitterness that is so hard to heal.

1.6 Ministers and members of congregations/groups should be aware that there are many sources of help and support for all aspects of congregational life from such bodies as the local District Association, the Ministerial Fellowship, the Unitarian Association of Lay Leaders and the GA staff.

1.7 Please remember that these are Guidelines – not laws or rules. They are common sense suggestions of ways to help congregations and their leaders create friendly and inspiring places of Unitarian witness. Unitarian congregations in Great Britain are democratically governed according to their own rules and/or the provisions of trust deeds. Each ministerial/congregational relationship is unique.

**NOTE** We have chosen in these guidelines to use the term **minister** for the congregational leader. We acknowledge that there are other categories of leadership for which most if not all of these guidelines will apply.

## 2. PREPARING FOR MINISTRY

2.1 There are many patterns of ministry with no one pattern being more appropriate than another. For some, one minister with a single congregation works well; for others a small group of churches can give variety, stimulation and opportunity for shared activities. The use of trained lay leaders adds a further dimension to this mosaic of leadership patterns. Whatever the pattern, thorough preparation for a ministry is essential.

2.2 When a minister is appointed to two or more congregations, one model which often works well is that of a joint appointment to 'the group'. Where this model is followed the congregations in the group should reach prior agreement, in writing, on how they will relate to each other and to the group, and how the cost will be shared. (Appendix 2 and 3 – sample agreements) A joint committee of representatives from each congregation is necessary to facilitate the appointment of a minister. This committee should continue to meet at regular intervals during the ministry to foster co-operation between the congregations and to be a forum for planning, managing, supporting and facilitating the ministry.

The joint managing committee should:

- Facilitate the financial basis of the ministry.
- Oversee times of services. Where times of service coincide, it is the responsibility of the congregation(s) concerned (or of the joint committee) to arrange (and meet the cost of) pulpit supplies.
- Monitor timing of congregational and committee meetings and other functions, to avoid clashes of dates and times.
- Arrange, where appropriate, joint activities in areas such as Religious Education, developing new patterns in worship, and publicity. Joint activities can foster group identity and make better use of the minister's time.
- Be a forum for sharing lay skill between congregations.
- Appoint a named single contact for issues to be raised to the managing committee
- Seek to develop a memorandum of understanding between the congregations

## PREPARING FOR MINISTRY

2.3 Unless otherwise specifically agreed between the congregations and the minister, it should be assumed that the minister's time and pastoral care are allocated to each congregation according to need, and not in proportion to the financial contributions of the congregations.

2.4 Sometimes a minister will have a separate appointment to two or more congregations. This is not strictly a group or joint ministry. In this case the ministerial duties need to be carefully defined. Financial arrangements and allocation of time and duties must be clearly articulated.

2.5 In preparation for ministry, congregations need to consider what they expect from a minister and what they will contribute as lay members of the congregations. This will later form the basis of the terms of appointment. Some congregations prepare a small brochure with a profile of the congregation, their aims and aspirations, and practical information about the congregation and area. It is recommended that a small 'search' committee be formed to undertake this work and ensure confidentiality during the process.

2.6 It is the responsibility of the congregation to ensure that adequate funding is in place to support ministry before any offer is made. This should be done at an early stage – as part of the initial preparation for ministry. Grants towards stipend may be available from the District Association and the Sustentation Fund. (See Appendix 1 for the GA form to be completed before appearing on the Ministerial Vacancy List)

2.7 The minister also needs to do preparatory work by considering what particular skills to highlight, the style of ministry preferred and generally draw together the material that will form his or her curriculum vitae.

2.8 Congregations seeking a minister, and ministers looking for a change of congregational charge or seeking a first ministry, should make use of the resources of the GA.

2.9 Congregations seeking a minister, full-time, part-time, temporary, or short-term should apply to the Ministry and Congregational Support Officer of the GA to be placed on the Ministerial Vacancy List. An updated copy of this list is made available online and circulated to all ministers on the Roll of the General Assembly as appropriate. It is sometimes possible for Districts to create part-time, temporary and short-term ministries although it is advisable to liaise with the GA when doing this.

2.10 Advertising by individual congregations in the denominational press is not recommended. There may be special circumstance when such an announcement is appropriate, but it is better if enquiries are directed to the Ministry and Congregational Support Officer of the GA. Ministers should neither make a direct approach to a congregation nor accept such from a congregation.

## PREPARING FOR MINISTRY

2.11 Once a minister expresses an interest in a ministerial vacancy the MSCO of the GA will inform the congregation and give the following details of the minister:

- Name, address, and current congregation (if applicable)
- Academic and professional background
- Ministerial positions or other administrative position held within the Unitarian movement

2.12 The congregation must then decide how to proceed. They may take no further action or they might call for further information from the minister and arrange a visit.

2.13 The resources of the District Association may be used in this preparation stage. Sometimes the District Association or the GA can recommend a minister or competent layperson who can advise and help a congregation in the search for a new minister, and guide them on procedure. Such a person can be useful in facilitating the whole matter, but may not advise on which candidate to choose, as that is the prerogative of the congregation(s) alone.

## **3. VISITING THE CONGREGATION**

### **THE EXPLORATORY VISIT**

3.1 Congregations often invite ministers expressing an interest (and therefore potential candidates) to come first on an exploratory visit. This practice has much to commend it. Such visits enable the congregation to meet the minister and talk with them. If the visit is to include a minister taking a service, this should be decided well beforehand. The visit enables the minister to become acquainted with the congregation and its contexts, and to see the manse, if there is one. The congregation and the minister can explore the situation through an exchange of views and expectations in either a congregational meeting or a management committee meeting.

3.2 On an exploratory visit, which may last over a weekend, if the minister has a partner, they may wish to come to see what the prospective move may involve for them and any family.

3.3 Such visits can help congregations to decide which of the interested ministers to invite as official candidates. The visit can also help a minister to decide whether to accept any invitation to be a candidate.

3.4 The need for absolute honesty and openness on all aspects of the ministry on the parts of both minister and congregation cannot be emphasized too strongly. This is the basis for a later successful partnership.

3.5 When arranging either exploratory or candidating visits, great care should be taken when publicising these, particularly with a view to not jeopardising a (potential) candidate's current pastoral relationships.

### **THE CANDIDATING VISIT**

3.6 Once candidates have been selected, each candidate should be invited to visit the congregation(s) on official candidating visits. The minister should conduct at least one service, and preferably spend two or three days meeting with members and talking with the committee(s). The minister's partner may also wish to be part of the visit.

3.7 Each candidate should receive from the congregation specific information before the visit:

- the proposed stipend
- length of agreement
- housing: manse or own house

## **VISITING THE CONGREGATION**

- terms of appointment (a draft agreement would be helpful) including expenses
- copies of recent annual reports and accounts, and newsletters
- a profile of the congregation(s) and their expectations
- from where they expect the minister to work (e.g., home, church office)
- helpful local information.
- a copy of the Rules of the Congregation(s) and, where appropriate, of constituent organisations regarding the appointment of ministers.

3.8 Ministers are advised to ascertain the position and function of the trustees - some meet regularly, some never, some administer funds, and some are, by terms of the Trust Deed, the only body entitled legally to appoint a minister chosen by the congregation.

3.9 The minister should normally provide:

- a curriculum vitae
- a statement of how they see the ministerial role
- some indication of working style (e.g. sermon titles, printed orders of worship etc.)
- evidence of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS,) or equivalent, certificate.

3.10 If names of referees are requested, the minister's prior permission must be obtained before the referees are contacted and care must be taken to ensure confidentiality.

### **ISSUES TO CLARIFY**

3.11 It is strongly recommended that ministers attend congregational committee meetings and/or any joint management committee meetings. This position should be clarified, as should the status of the minister as either a voting member or present in an advisory capacity.

3.12 A candidate is advised to ascertain the basis of voting membership of the congregation(s) and whether the minister is entitled and/or expected to attend general meetings of the congregation(s).

3.13 Ministers and congregations should satisfy themselves on all points they consider to be important before or during the candidating visit. This should be minuted and be the basis of the written agreement. If a minister decides to withdraw, the congregation(s) involved should be informed at once, so that unnecessary congregational meetings are avoided.

# VISITING THE CONGREGATION

## PAYING FOR EXPLORATORY AND CANDIDATING VISITS

The same guidelines apply to both types of visit:

3.14 The inviting congregation(s) should pay the current ministerial fee for taking a service and all expenses (travel, accommodation), including those of the candidate's family.

3.15 The minister is responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate supply for his or her own present pulpit(s) without expense to the home congregation.

## PRACTICAL ISSUES FOR CANDIDATING

3.16 When there is to be a candidating visit, the congregation(s) concerned should inform all members, so that they can meet the potential new minister and share in the choice. Some congregations do this by means of private communication with each member. It should not be announced in the newsletter. The communication can also give due notice of a subsequent congregational meeting to discuss the choice of a new minister.

3.17 If there is more than one candidate under consideration, the candidating visits should be as close together in time as possible. Once all candidates have been heard, and interviewed, the congregation(s) should decide as quickly as possible which candidate, if any, is to be invited to become their minister. As soon as an invitation has been accepted, or it has been decided not to make an appointment, all candidates should be informed of the decision immediately.

3.18 A procedure worth consideration at a congregational meeting to appoint a minister is, first, to have a vote expressing any preference. If there is a clear preference, the formal motion can be put: - that the Rev. 'X' be invited – this often attracts a unanimous vote.

3.19 Where two or more congregations seek to appoint a minister jointly, each congregation usually has to meet separately, in accordance with its rules or with the terms of its trust deed, to vote on an appointment. Should the congregations vote differently, joint discussions should take place quickly to see if an agreement can be achieved.

3.20 Ministerial vacancies should be filled according to a professional model appropriate to ministry. There are two models of appointment:

- a) one candidate at a time
- b) all candidates at the same time.

## **VISITING THE CONGREGATION**

Having too many candidates at one time should be avoided; three, at most, is adequate. Sensitivity about this matter and the reservations some have about competition among colleges should be recognised.

Experience has shown that if possible a search committee should seek to put forward one name at a time for consideration rather than have candidates appear to compete against one another.

3.21 Normally a minister should not be a candidate for more than one appointment at any one time. However, there are occasions, particularly when an appointment is sought by a specific date (e.g. a ministry student nearing the end of training, or a minister whose present appointment is coming to an end), when it is necessary to explore more than one possibility at a time. In the normal way this can be affected by exploratory visits with the possibility of later becoming a formal candidate. Discretion should be used when circumstances necessitate candidating for more than one vacancy at a time.

3.22 A congregation should not issue a formal invitation, unless the minister has indicated a willingness to accept, in principle, the appointment.

### **TERMS OF APPOINTMENT**

3.23 Congregations should draw up proposed terms of appointment covering all necessary points so that candidates may have a clear picture of what is envisaged. The terms should be discussed openly with candidates. Attention to detail in the terms and conditions is important. This provides a solid basis for co-operative ministry and avoidance of misunderstandings later. The written agreement should define the rights and responsibilities of the parties.

3.24 On appointment of a minister, the agreed terms of appointment should be signed by the minister and by officers of the congregations and copies retained by both parties. A copy of this signed agreement should be filed at Essex Hall. A sample template is available from Essex Hall.

3.25 Ministers of religion are, in the United Kingdom, taxed as if they were employed for the purpose of Income Tax and National Insurance. However, whilst their Terms of Appointment may resemble a 'Contract of Service', ministers are not legally regarded as 'employed' under the provisions of the Employment and Industrial Relations Acts. They are deemed to have 'Office Holder' status. This rather anomalous position needs to be remembered by both minister and congregation and a feeling of 'shared endeavour' with agreed goals is likely to surmount any narrow legal definitions. The law may change and further updated information is available from Essex Hall.

3.26 The terms of appointment should confirm that the congregation have agreed to participate in the Ministers' Pension Fund (or a pension scheme of the

## **VISITING THE CONGREGATION**

minister's choice), making the prescribed contributions. They will also participate in the National Insurance pension scheme without contracting out.

3.27 The minister should be familiar with the terms of the Trust Deed and the Rules or Constitution of the congregation. It is useful to provide the minister with a photocopy of the Trust Deed, and also for the secretary to keep a copy on file.

3.28 The terms of appointment should state clearly the 'grievance procedure' so that grievances can be dealt with and resolved as quickly and as fairly as possible.

3.29 The agreement should not be forgotten once the ministry has begun. The value of review sessions is now recognised in many walks of life. It is recommended that there should be regular discussions to appraise and assess how the congregation and the minister are doing things, what is going well and how they might be done better. Regular discussion involves the recognition that the nature of ministry is constantly changing in areas such as spiritual leadership, pastoral work and congregational development. This should not be seen as a review of the Minister, more the opportunity to review ministry within the congregation and community.

## **4. THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (1)**

4.1 The committee of the congregation should assume some responsibility for helping to settle in its new minister (and family) into their new home, community and position. It is helpful for someone to assist with guidance on local geography, and offer advice on shopping, schools, doctors, dentists and the like.

4.2 The secretary or other officer should ensure that the minister has a list of names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of members and friends. Account should be taken, where appropriate, of the Data Protection Act.

4.3 Members and other attenders should be asked to help the settling-in by introducing themselves and, if appropriate inviting the minister to pay an initial visit.

### **MINISTER'S ACCOMMODATION**

**Ministers may live in a manse owned by the church, or in their own house**

#### **THE MANSE**

4.4 The conditions under which a minister occupies a manse (house or flat) provided by the congregation should be made clear when an appointment is being negotiated, and clearly stated in the terms of appointment. Normally the conditions should specify that:

- a. the minister (and family) occupies the manse free of rent, water rates and council tax during the period of the appointment;
- b. the insurance of the building (including indemnity against legal liability to third parties) is the responsibility of the congregation;
- c. the insurance of the contents of the manse is the responsibility of the minister. Any congregational property kept at the manse (e.g. a copier) should be covered by the main congregational insurance policy. This positioning of congregational property outside the church may have to be declared to the insurance company;
- d. the congregation is responsible for the internal decoration being in good condition and the premises in good order before the minister takes up occupation;
- e. normal redecoration is the responsibility of the minister, but the cost of redecoration occasioned by structural defects, alterations or repairs should be met by the congregation;

## **THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (1)**

f. the congregation is responsible for all structural repairs and outside paintwork, and for maintaining the manse and grounds to currently acceptable housing standards, including adequate insulation against heat loss. The responsibility for general week-by-week gardening should be negotiated between minister and congregation.

4.5 A minister should not sub-let any part of the manse without the prior written consent of the congregation or trustees (as the case may be). A situation must be avoided whereby there is difficulty in obtaining full vacant possession of the manse should the minister leave.

4.6 Congregations or trustees should never let an empty manse, or part of a large or sub-divided manse without taking legal advice.

4.7 In the event of a minister dying while still appointed to a congregation (or being so incapacitated as to be unable to continue the ministry) the occupancy of the manse by the minister's family can present a problem. Congregations are urged to be understanding, and allow the surviving partner to continue in residence for a period (often about six months) free of rent. This allows for a period of adjustment and time for future plans to be made during a difficult and distressing time.

4.8 In cases of divorce/separation, congregations are asked to show compassion.

4.9 Such generosity should not be exploited, and it must be realised that continued occupancy can only be for a finite period. Practical help and advice in financial matters and in seeking new accommodation can be given by members of the congregation and by the District Association or the Chief Officer of the GA.

4.10 When a congregation sells its manse it is wise to invest the proceeds (on professional advice) to make provision for future housing need.

### **MINISTER'S OWN HOUSE**

4.11 Where a manse is not provided, the congregation should pay to the minister a housing allowance not less than that currently recommended by the GA.

4.12 The minister residing in their own house should take out adequate comprehensive insurance for both house and contents.

4.13 Where a minister chooses to live can be a source of discontent with differing views on what is a reasonable distance from the congregation's place of worship. There should be open and frank discussion between the minister and

## **THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (1)**

the congregation on house location and the minister's availability in order to avoid subsequent misunderstanding or disappointment. Travel expenses may be an associated issue to consider at this point.

4.14 Congregations are urged to consider sympathetically any decision of a minister to own their own home.

### **Removal Expenses and Resettlement Grant**

4.15 Congregations should pay the cost of removal of the furniture and effects of the new minister and family to their new home. This should be confirmed when the appointment is offered.

4.16 On appointment, including a minister's first appointment, a minister should also receive the recommended (re) settlement Grant from the appointing congregation(s). The purpose of this grant is to help the minister and their family with expenses incurred when settling into a new home. The amount of this grant is determined by the Stipend Review Panel and reviewed annually.

## **5. THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (2)**

### **STIPEND SCALE**

5.1 Each year the GA issues a recommended minimum stipend scale for ministers and lay pastors. Congregations should review the minister's stipend annually (usually as from 1<sup>st</sup> October in each year), making sure that it is at least in line with the recommended minimum appropriate stipend scale.

Copies of the current scales are available from the GA website or the Ministry and Congregational Support Officer of the GA.

### **GRANTS TOWARDS STIPEND**

5.2 Congregations unable to meet the whole of the emoluments due to a minister may receive grants towards stipends, either from the GA Sustentation Fund or from the District Association, or both. Other funds or trusts may offer some financial support. Applications usually have to be made on a prescribed form, and need has to be demonstrated through audited or examined accounts and annual reports.

5.3 There are some special funds for which certain ministers qualify (e.g. The General Baptist Assembly, or some local funds).

5.4 The GA Sustentation Fund covers congregations affiliated to the GA, and applications for grants for the year beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> October each year must be made on the appropriate forms. These are obtainable from the MCSO at Essex Hall.

5.5 The application is usually made in March through the District Association, which has to endorse the application and forward it to the Sustentation Fund (usually in May). Each application must be accompanied by:

- a copy of the latest annual report,
- audited or examined accounts (including subsidiary accounts and trustees' accounts where they exist),
- joint accounts in the case of a joint ministry,
- budget forecasts for the current and coming years.

5.6 Grants from the Sustentation Fund are conditional upon at least the minimum recommended stipend being paid, and congregations paying their 'GA Quota'

### **NON-TRAVEL EXPENSES**

## THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (2)

5.7 Congregations should reimburse the minister for all expenses incurred in the performance of ministerial duties. Reimbursement should be for actual amounts expended rather than by making fixed allowances.

Non-travel expenses should include:

- a. Postage
- b. Stationery and office supplies, including photocopying, supplies for maintenance of computers etc., and any expenditure by the minister in connection with newsletters, notices, order of service, etc.
- c. Telephone: congregations should normally ensure that a telephone is installed in the minister's residence and pay for the rental and all calls on ministerial business. The use of mobile phones and ministries, which operate from a church base/office, may require a different pattern of reimbursement. This must be negotiated as part of the 'terms and conditions.'
- d. Other expenses that support the better provision of ministry (e.g. books, worship materials, internet and email access). Ministers and congregations should be aware of what items are tax deductible.

### TRAVEL EXPENSES

5.8 All travel expenses incurred in the performance of ministerial duties should be reimbursed.

#### Car

5.9 The minister may own his/her own car and receive a 'mileage allowance' or use a car provided by the congregation and pay the congregation for private usage. The former is usually the easier to operate.

5.10 The provision and running of a car is a necessity in most ministries and the congregation should make adequate financial provision for this.

5.11 Where the congregation purchases the car, an annual amount should be set aside for replacement. Insurance should be comprehensive.

5.12 Where the minister owns the car, the 'mileage allowance' should be adequate to cover as well as fuel, all non-fuel costs including comprehensive insurance and depreciation. The Inland Revenue each year sets a figure up to which a mileage allowance can be paid without incurring further tax. There are many variables here: size of car, amount of usage, insurance rating of the driver etc. so that each situation must be addressed on its own merits and an appropriate mileage rate decided. The GA gives relevant information each year and general guidance can be found on the web sites of motoring organisations.

## THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (2)

5.13 Mileage allowance for motor-bikes and bicycles should also be based on covering all costs

### Other transport

5.14 The congregation should provide a bus pass and/or rail card where such is helpful in ministerial travel.

5.15 The reimbursement of expenses for attendance at meetings and conferences should be clarified as far as possible and agreed during the negotiation of a settlement and clearly stated in the terms of appointment. This is a guideline list:

- General Assembly meetings and pre-assembly Ministers' conference,
- District Association meetings (unless paid for by the District),
- Other meetings on behalf of the congregation,
- Ministerial Fellowship conference
- UALL meetings
- Conferences or events arranged by the Colleges and, wherever possible, other meetings relevant to the work of the ministry, including the cost of necessary meals and accommodation.

5.16 The minister should keep accurate records of all expenses claimed. Where there is an element of confidentiality in, for example, a pastoral visit, the Minister should judge what degree of detail should be given.

### PAYMENT OF STIPEND AND EXPENSES

5.17 The minister's stipend is usually paid monthly in arrears. It should be paid promptly on the due day, often on the last Sunday of the month.

5.18 The stipend may be paid by bankers' standing order on (say) the 28<sup>th</sup> day of each month. To do this it is necessary to estimate the net monthly stipend and agree the amount for the standing order. Adjustment is then made by cheque or cash once the precise figures for the month are available.

5.19 A similar exercise can be done for expenses, although these are likely to vary more widely from month to month

5.20 The congregation as an employer is responsible for maintaining relevant payroll records and deducting PAYE and NIC from the stipend and accounting for them to HMRC. Payroll services are often offered by local voluntary sector organisations and these might be the most cost effective mechanism. All employers now have to submit their PAYE details to HMRC using Real Time Information (RTI)

## THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (2)

RTI information can be found at

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payerti/reporting/what-to-report.htm>

### **Deductions – Tax and Insurance- the role of the treasurer**

5.21 The treasurer of the congregation (or of the joint committee) is required to deduct income tax and national insurance contributions before paying the stipend. These are calculated by means of tax tables supplied by the District Inspector of Taxes.

5.22 The treasurer should deal with the minister's contributions to the Ministers' Pension Fund (MPF). Contributions are calculated as a percentage of the stipend (plus housing allowance), with part paid by the congregation and part by the minister. The contribution for the year is calculated on the annual rate of stipend payable on 1 January. Additional Voluntary Contributions payable by the minister alone are possible, and should be considered. The treasurer pays the total contribution by direct debit monthly.

5.23 The treasurer is obliged by law to provide the minister with a statement with each payment showing how the net stipend is calculated. The statement should show gross amount payable, together with deductions for income tax, national insurance, MPF, etc. At the end of each tax year the treasurer must supply the minister with a certificate of gross pay and tax deducted on Form P60 - supplied by the Inspector of Taxes. When a minister leaves, Form P45 must be issued.

5.24 The minister should preserve these papers carefully. They are required for making the annual tax return and for future reference.

5.25 When a minister is required to occupy a manse as part of the terms of appointment and required to vacate the manse when the appointment is terminated, then the annual value of the manse as the minister's place of residence is not included in assessment of the minister's income for the purpose of income tax.

5.26 A housing allowance in lieu of a manse is, however, regarded as stipend. It is taxable and is also taken into account in calculating National Insurance contributions. The housing allowance or the equivalent value where a manse is occupied is taken into account when assessing contributions for MPF.

## THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (2)

5.27 Where the manse or minister's residence is used as the minister's place of work, then the minister may normally claim, as an allowance against taxable income, a portion of the costs of providing this accommodation. This claim could include: heat and light, insurance, cleaning, renewals and repairs (not improvements), which are paid by the minister. In the case of a minister's own house, the claim will also include water rate/charges, council tax and structural maintenance. Excessive claims in this area might render the minister liable to partial assessment for capital gains tax on the sale of the house.

5.28 The rules governing income tax may change and ministers and treasurers are advised to check on the current situation.

5.29 On certain matters of general importance on ministers' income tax, the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (formerly known as the Churches Main Committee) negotiates rulings with the appropriate government agencies. Any matters of general principle, which they wish to take up, should be channelled through the Chief Officer of the GA.

## 6. THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (3)

### SPECIAL SERVICES

#### INDUCTION SERVICE/SERVICE OF WELCOME

6.1 There is no fixed pattern for the induction of a new minister. Among Unitarians in England, Wales and Scotland, the authority of a minister is a gift from their congregation. A common tradition is that a service should be conducted by a neighbouring minister with two guest preachers, one to give a *Charge to the Minister*, the other to give a *Charge to the Congregation*. The choice of these guest preachers is either by mutual consent or by the new minister choosing one and the congregation the other. For a first ministry, one of the charges is sometimes given by the Principal or a tutor of the minister's college. Sometimes one guest minister may combine both charges in one address. The congregation are advised to ascertain beforehand what fees and likely expenses will be incurred for this occasion.

6.2 The form and content of the service should be worked out jointly by the new minister and the congregation. Other participants may be involved at the planning stage if this is deemed practicable and/or necessary. It is usual for the President or similar officer of the congregation formally to install the new minister and offer 'the right hand of friendship', and for the new minister to respond with a formal undertaking. The new minister normally closes the service with a benediction.

6.3 When a minister is inducted into a Group Ministry a single united induction service is clearly most appropriate. For a joint ministry the single united service is still preferred but it is recognised that geography, worship style etc. might dictate alternative arrangement.

6.4 It is customary to invite friends from other Unitarian congregations in the district, together with representatives from other religious denominations and faiths and local civic leaders, as well as friends of the new minister, including members of his/her previous congregations.

#### FEES FOR SUNDAY SERVICES ('Preaching Fees')

6.5 Fees and expenses for all categories of worship leader are recommended annually by the GA. These provide the basic information for determining fees and expenses. All fees and expenses should be paid in accordance with these recommendations and should be paid on the day of the visit.

## **THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (3)**

6.6 When inviting a minister to conduct a service for a special occasion the inviting congregation should indicate the fee to be paid. This should not be less than the current minimum recommended by the GA. Expenses (travel, telephone and meal allowance where necessary) are paid in addition to the fee.

6.7 Congregations are encouraged to recognise the extra preparation required for some special services.

6.8 When the 'home' minister supplies the pulpit of the visiting minister (exchange of pulpits) a fee is not normally paid. For an exchange of pulpits, the expenses of both ministers are the responsibility of the inviting congregation.

6.9 Where there is no 'home' minister to exchange, then the GA recommended fee should be paid by the inviting congregation along with any additional cost of providing a pulpit supply for the congregation of the invited minister. The responsibility for finding such a pulpit supply normally rests with the invited minister.

6.10 When a minister is invited to take a District service, the normal fee and expenses should be paid by the District Association.

6.11 Lay Pastors and students for the ministry should be paid the GA recommended fee and expenses when they conduct services.

6.12 Lay Worship Leaders are entitled to the GA recommended fee plus expenses. Some regard this as purely voluntary service and do not wish to receive a fee. They can ask the local treasurer to send it direct to some designated body (which may be the District Lay Preachers' Association). Some Districts have an arrangement whereby lay worship leaders have their expenses met from a travel pool to which congregations contribute.

### **FEES FOR OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES (e.g. Rites of Passage)**

6.13 Although the GA circulates occasional information from other denominations, it is recognized that such fees must normally be set locally due to differing requirements and resources. Different fees may apply to members and non-members of the congregation.

6.14 When an occasional service takes place in the church or chapel, some congregations agree on an inclusive fee, which the minister or other appointed person collects and distributes. This should normally cover the services of the minister, organist, caretaker, use of the building, etc.

6.15 For a marriage service, the inclusive fee should also include the fee due for the registration of the marriage where there is an Authorised Person (in

## **THE MINISTRY IN PRACTICE (3)**

England and Wales); and such other fees as are due in Scotland or Northern Ireland. And in the case of a funeral, any fees or payments due where there is an interment in the Church or Chapel graveyard.

6.16 Most ministers do not charge a fee for a baptism (naming ceremony) or similar, when it takes place as part of normal worship in their home congregation. Fees and expenses should be offered to a visiting officiant.

6.17 The congregation may make a charge for the use of the building.

6.18 Any waiving or reduction of fees is entirely a matter for ministerial/ local discretion. A donation to the church may be suggested when fees are reduced or waived.

6.19 Fees for professional services outside of the church and congregation are a matter for the minister's discretion.

## **7. WORKING TOGETHER**

### **WORKING CONDITIONS AND TIME**

7.1 Ministers are normally expected to work five days and have two rest days per week.

7.2 Ministers should advise the relevant committee on how they prioritise their time, and give regular reports on the various aspects of their work. These reports should include work undertaken and future plans, as well as some indication of work at district and national level, and in the local community. It is recognised that the detail should not breach aspects of confidentiality.

7.3 The minister's two rest days should be respected. Congregations should ensure that two rest days per week and a full holiday entitlement, as recommended by the GA, are taken.

7.4 Pro-rata arrangements should be agreed where the ministry is part-time.

### **EVENTS**

7.5 If the attendance of the minister is desired, they should be consulted when fixing times and dates. Other ministerial duties may occasionally prevent a minister from attending events, even though there has been prior consultation. Where the minister is fixing dates/times, consultation with the officers and/or committee should avoid clashes.

7.6 In situations where a minister serves more than one congregation, it is desirable that all the congregations consult with each other before making plans for the minister to attend an event. The value of a joint managing committee that meets regularly is not to be underestimated.

### **VISITORS AND ENTERTAINING**

7.7 Congregations should, where appropriate, offer adequate hospitality to visiting guest speakers or preachers. It should not be taken for granted that the resident minister or family provides this. If the minister does provide hospitality, the congregation should offer to defray the financial outlay involved.

### **MINISTER AND COMMITTEE**

7.8 Whilst, under the provisions of the Trust Deed or Constitution, ministers may or may not be a member of the congregation or committee, they should

## **WORKING TOGETHER**

attend committee meetings, but not vote. There may be circumstances when it is reasonable and desirable for the committee to meet without the minister.

7.9 It is good practice to have regular reviews of the relationship between the minister and the congregation, and the ways in which they are meeting each other's needs. This is usually best done in meetings with representatives of the committee and the minister, where all are prepared to be open and frank, though, of course, courteous in their comments.

7.10 Committees will usually be found ready to respect their minister's opinions, but if they cannot see their way to follow a lead, the minister should be prepared to accept their decision. The minister should be careful not to exaggerate the importance of such differences. However, if a difference is one of principle, the minister may consider whether acceptance is consistent with continuing as minister of that particular congregation.

### **THE MINISTER AND GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

7.11 Local custom and the Rules and Trust Deeds of congregations vary on the matter of whether a minister is, or may become, a member of the congregation. Some ministers choose to do so. If the minister is a member, it is best to avoid participation in any capacity other than as minister.

7.12 It is desirable for the minister to attend annual general meetings of the congregation in an advisory capacity, perhaps withdrawing when there is to be discussion related to the minister.

7.13 A minister may remain as a subscribing member of a former congregation to keep up interested contact, but he or she should not participate in that congregation's affairs (see Chapter 11)

7.14 Congregations should not ask or expect a minister or members of their family to make financial contributions to congregational funds, though they may contribute if they wish.

### **MINISTER AND CONGREGATION SHARING**

7.15 It is the responsibility of the minister to assess his or her own personal interests and talents, and to continue professional training when opportunity or need indicates (see Chapter 10). The minister should also assist the congregation in developing other leadership skills, particularly in spheres where the minister finds it difficult to be active or effective.

## **WORKING TOGETHER**

7.16 Some tasks can and should be done by lay-folk. Ministers should not be expected to be responsible for administration, congregational finances, or caretaking, for example. Not only does this divert the minister's energies from the real work of ministry, but it reduces the involvement of members in the life and work of the congregation. Ministers should encourage members of the congregation to accept responsibility for predominantly administrative tasks and also some pastoral ones, such as regular visiting of the housebound; this can strengthen the life of the congregation. The effectiveness of ministry can often be assessed by the way the life and administration of a congregation continues during a subsequent interregnum.

7.17 Reports of congregational activities for local and denominational press should not normally be expected of the minister. Matters which come under the broad heading of publicity and outreach (e.g. letters to the press on matters of public concern, appearance on local radio, press release for a special service) can, of course, quite properly fall within the minister's sphere of activity. Each congregation should have a press officer.

7.18 In making a public statement the minister should be careful to distinguish between personal views and those of the congregation. It is inadvisable for a minister to send letters to the press on official church notepaper, when expressing personal views.

7.19 There are some matters (e.g. editing and/or producing the congregation's newsletter, public relations), in which a minister may wish to be involved, albeit sharing some of the work with lay members. This should be discussed and agreed in each individual case.

7.20 The minister should endeavour to keep in touch with denominational concerns by attending District and General Assembly events, ministers' meetings, ministers' conferences, in-service training courses etc. and congregations should meet the expenses involved. However, ministers should balance the time taken in local ministry with that taken by such involvement and be open with their congregation about such involvement. (See also 8.14)

### **MINISTERIAL FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY**

7.21 Freedom of the pulpit is a fundamental element of our Unitarian and Free Christian tradition. Ministers should remember that by virtue of their office they act in a representative capacity. Their lifestyle and their published utterances affect not only their congregational fellowship, but also the public esteem in which both their congregations and the whole movement are held. They should reflect carefully upon the implications of their actions.

## WORKING TOGETHER

7.22 Controversial issues of the day are best entered into as a shared concern of minister and congregation. In some cases a congregation may consider an 'unpopular image' an advantage, but a minister should avoid bringing a congregation into a notoriety they do not desire.

7.23 A minister should respect the traditions of a congregation. Change may be welcome, but is best done in consultation with the congregation. Where a matter of principle or conscience is involved this should be discussed and resolved before an invitation is accepted.

7.24 Ministers should respect the sanctity of their church or chapel premises as carefully as they would wish their lay members to do.

7.25 In matters of administration, business and correspondence, ministers should be attentive to detail and prompt.

7.26 Ministers should refrain from discussing the shortcomings of their predecessors, and from using the pulpit or newsletter as a platform from which to air their views about any local difficulty in the congregation.

7.27 Just occasionally it is necessary to speak from the pulpit on matters of principle concerning 'local difficulties'. This should be done with extreme care.

7.28 Ministers on denominational committees may acquire confidential information about other ministers, congregations or individuals. This should be treated with absolute discretion.

## **8. OUTSIDE THE MINISTRY**

### **THE MINISTER'S PARTNER**

- 8.1 Any minister's partner should be regarded and treated by both congregation and minister as an individual who is separate from but deeply affected by the conduct of the ministry and by the relationship between the minister and the congregation(s).
- 8.2 A minister's partner may be interested in and become involved in congregational affairs, but it should be recognised that this is in a purely voluntary capacity. Involvement should not be expected as a matter of course, nor should a partner expect to exercise responsibility by virtue of their position.
- 8.3 A partner may have a full-time career in another field, and their relationship does not necessarily mean that the partner is a committed Unitarian or even a keen church member.
- 8.4 If members of congregations wish to communicate with their minister, they should do so directly whenever possible and not through their partner.
- 8.5 It is not recommended that the partner serve on the same congregational committee(s) as the minister.

### **THE MINISTER IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

- 8.6 Individuals recognised on the GA Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors may not serve concurrently as a minister or other religious leader or church official of another religious denomination or movement either on a paid or voluntary basis. Leadership roles in the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the General Baptist Assembly are exclusions from this policy. This exclusion does not include organisations that expect adherence to a particular belief or faith stance, or loyalty or obedience to a particular person or body.
- 8.7 An individual on the GA Roll who takes up a leadership position in another religious denomination, not excluded above, shall be given a written warning. If they do not relinquish the other position within six months of the warning, they will be removed from the GA Roll and lose all privileges and rights associated with that status.
- 8.8 An individual who receives a written warning under the above provision is entitled to appeal to the Ministry Strategy Group.

# **OUTSIDE THE MINISTRY**

## **OUTSIDE PAID WORK AND OTHER COMMITMENTS**

8.9 In general, outside paid work is undesirable in the full time ministry.

8.12 If extra activities are undertaken, they should be carefully regulated so that they in no way impinge upon ministerial time, effective ministry, or availability.

8.13 Congregations should be advised of any paid work undertaken and, where appropriate, be consulted before accepting any outside paid work

## **SERVING THE DENOMINATION**

8.14 Congregations and ministers are urged to accept their denominational responsibilities in every practicable way. Ministers and lay delegates should be encouraged to attend General Assembly and District Association meetings, and, where appropriate, take office, accept nomination to committees or undertake denominational tasks.

## **9. SPECIAL MINISTRIES**

### **INTERIM/SHORT TERM MINISTRIES**

9.1 Between the departure of a minister and the appointment of a successor, there is sometimes a need for a breathing space. In such circumstances a congregation may appoint an interim/short term minister for a specified period (up to two years).

9.2 The interim/short term minister can act as a facilitator, advising the congregation on procedures in their search for a new minister and generally preparing a congregation for a new ministry. The interim/short term minister will only advise – choice is a matter for the congregation alone.

9.3 A congregation should not normally consider, as a candidate for their full time minister, a minister who has been an interim/short term minister with them, nor should the interim/short term minister normally consider candidating.

9.4 Information and practical advice on the availability of interim/short term ministers, and on the arrangements which need to be made, can be obtained from the Ministry and Congregational Support Officer of the GA. This should be the first step when seeking an interim/short term minister.

### **EXCHANGE MINISTRIES**

9.5 Opportunities may exist for Unitarian ministers in the British Isles to exchange, for periods from three to six months, with a Unitarian Universalist minister in North America. There have been several such successful exchanges arranged through the GA and the UUA, who can recommend ministers to each other.

9.6 The first step towards an exchange must be to consult with the Ministry and Congregational Support Officer of the GA. Information on procedure, financial implications, and the arrangements to be made can be given. The Ministry and Congregational Support Officer is also able to indicate what possibilities exist and help in making arrangements.

9.7 Ministers should not try to initiate exchanges without this consultation.

9.8 The success of such exchange ministries depends not only on goodwill, but also on careful planning. There must be a full exchange of information as well as a clear agreement on financial arrangements. Both the exchanging ministers and their congregations need to be fully involved in the preparation for exchange.

## **SPECIAL MINISTRIES**

9.9 Discomfort and disappointment can be avoided by careful and detailed exchange of information before arriving in the host country.

9.10 Care must be taken to allow for, and to make compensation for different practices in congregations of different traditions, for different ways of doing things, for the different laws of the two countries, and for the different systems of medical care and children's education.

9.11 Usually the ministers and their families exchange houses, car and duties, with the annual holiday (or part of it) taken during the stay in the other country.

### **OTHER SPECIAL MINISTRIES**

9.12 There are certain non-congregational appointments that are regarded as ministerial - such as when a minister is appointed to a district, a denominational post, a chaplaincy, or to a college post for training ministers. These Guidelines should apply, where appropriate, to these appointments.

## **10. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

10.1 Regular and realistic self-assessment together with a dialogue between the minister and the congregation should be the basis for determining what continuing professional development would be helpful to both minister and congregation. Ministers may also make arrangements with a person outside of the congregation (mentor/supervisor/spiritual director) for regular reflection.

10.2 Congregations should support and encourage the minister to pursue appropriate continuing professional education. If possible the congregation or District Association should meet expenses. Ministers from 2021 entering onto the GA Roll with Full Status will be required to participate in an Individual Learning Agreement that will help structure this activity.

10.3 Such education may mean that the minister may find it necessary to be absent from some normal duties or withdraw from some established task. Lay people should be encouraged to fill these gaps. In some cases, a neighbouring minister may be able to help.

10.4 Opportunities within the denomination for further professional education include:

- Courses and Conferences at the Colleges
- Ministerial Fellowship conferences
- District Ministers' Meetings
- Courses run by GA Commissions and Panels

10.5 Training situations outside the denomination might include:

- Counselling courses
- Group and inter-personal dynamic training
- Seminars at hospitals and hospices
- Courses run by or for other voluntary bodies (e.g. on time management, conflict resolution etc.)

### **ACADEMIC COURSES**

10.6 A minister may wish to engage in further academic study (e.g. a degree or diploma at an institute of higher education). The implications for the ministry should be discussed fully between the minister and congregation.

### **SABBATICAL LEAVE**

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

10.7 Congregations are asked to consider the principle of extended paid leave every seven, or at most ten years. Sabbatical leave should be seen as an opportunity for renewal, refreshment and perhaps a refocusing of purpose. The sabbatical can take many forms, depending on the minister's situation, but might be:

- Continuing professional education
- Developing an academic project
- Undertaking a course of study
- Intensive reading/research programme
- A written project with a view to publication

10.8 The minister's absence on sabbatical leave requires very detailed consultation and planning between the minister and the congregation if the leave is to be successful for both parties. The following areas should be considered:

- Pastoral care
- Rites of passage
- Religious Education
- Financial, including pulpit supplies
- Other tasks normally undertaken by the minister

These areas can be covered, at least for short periods, by lay people or by neighbouring ministers. The District Association can sometimes help. Where professional help is used, the appropriate fees and expenses must be paid.

10.9 The experience of many sabbaticals is one of renewal for the minister and a greater sense of common purpose in the congregation.

10.10 The GA has a detailed policy on sabbatical leave (see Appendix 6).

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An important element of continuing professional development is creating resilience. Issues such as stress, burnout, welfare issues, sick leave and compassionate leave rules, working from home during covid, returning from working at home/furlough etc have all created an environment in which mental resilience is a subject that both ministers and congregations should be aware of and be open to working to build resilience.

There are many generic online tools, of variable quality of course. Below are some that may be a useful starting place for congregations to work with (because they are generic, online and provided by an employee benefits provider so it is written in a practical way).

[https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/CR00233\\_Ebook\\_dualbranded\\_interactive.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/CR00233_Ebook_dualbranded_interactive.pdf)

<https://e-modules.unum.co.uk/stress-awareness>

<https://www.unum.co.uk/workplace-wellbeing>

# **11. SEEKING A MOVE AND DEPARTURE**

## **GIVING NOTICE**

11.1 A minister contemplating a move should ensure that the committee of the congregation is made aware of this at the earliest opportunity. Under certain circumstances, it is recognised that an initial confidentiality may be necessary, and in that case a minister should take a responsible officer of the congregation into their confidence.

11.2 Once an offer of another ministry has been accepted the minister should formally tender notice, in writing, of the termination of the present ministry.

11.3 During the period of notice (normally three months) the minister's relationship with members of the congregation will necessarily change. The minister should nevertheless continue to minister fully to the people within this altered context.

11.4 A minister should always try to leave a congregation in such a manner as to make them desirous of an occasional return visit.

11.5 During the period of notice, a minister should avoid taking a leadership role in the planning of new ventures in congregational affairs where these relate to the period following their departure.

11.6 It is not appropriate for a minister who is leaving to advise a congregation as to their choice of successor. Congregations should make use of the official channels (the District Association and the GA – or the Presbytery in Ireland) in seeking advice and assistance in this matter.

## **DEPARTURE**

11.7 It can be helpful to a successor if an outgoing minister is able to supply local information, including names and addresses of non-members who have been visited in a pastoral capacity. This information should be as objective as possible so that comments do not perpetuate prejudices in the new ministry. A new minister in a new situation can best enter upon it with an open mind.

11.8 General advice to a minister contemplating a new appointment, or to a congregation seeking to appoint a new minister, can be offered by the District Association and/or the GA Ministry and Congregational Support Officer.

# SEEKING A MOVE AND DEPARTURE

## THE POSITION OF FORMER MINISTERS

11.9 Ministers who have left a congregation either by moving to another congregation, retiring or leaving the ministry, no longer hold office in their previous congregation. Once they have left, the minister-congregation relationship changes.

11.10 It is not desirable that a minister should accept an invitation to return for a Sunday service or to attend any other function during a period of at least a year from the date of appointment of a successor, and even after that, visits should not be frequent. A minister should be careful not to act in any way, inadvertently or otherwise, which tends to diminish the prestige and influence of a successor.

11.11 A former minister should not conduct any service or perform any ministerial function in the church or for members of the congregation without the full knowledge and permission of the present minister.

11.12 If a family in a congregation wishes to use the services of a former minister upon the occasion of a wedding or a funeral, the approval of the present minister should be formally requested. Committees of congregations should be careful to safeguard their present minister's rightful claim to such matters.

11.13 A former minister should play no role, express no opinions and enter into no discussion in any matters concerning the working or decision-making of the congregation.

11.14 All social contacts between a former minister and members of the congregation should be circumspect and restricted. Both minister and people should recognize that social contact – even the presence of a former minister can undermine or prevent the growth of or even destroy the professional relationship between people in the congregation and a successor.

11.15 A limited number of friendships will doubtless be maintained, but everything should be done to encourage members to regard the successor as their minister.

11.16 A former minister must continue to maintain complete discretion in respecting confidences and information about individuals after ceasing to be minister of a congregation, and should not exploit such information for any purpose. This also applies when a minister has left the ministry altogether.

## **12. TOWARDS RETIREMENT AND AFTER**

### **PRE-RETIREMENT COURSES**

12.1 The GA has agreed to pay 50% of the cost of an approved pre-retirement course for ministers in the 12 months prior to retirement and the congregations are asked to support the ministers for the other 50% of the cost and encourage all ministers to attend such a course.

### **AGE OF RETIREMENT**

12.2 There is no prescribed retirement age. It would be good practice for the minister and congregation to find out each other's views on this issue.

12.3 The decision to retire is that of the Ministers alone, Ministers wishing to serve after retirement should be encouraged to consider service:

- a. in part-time or voluntary denominational posts,
- b. as relief ministers or ministers at large within districts,
- c. in fixed-term, temporary, special purpose ministries where there is need,
- d. as mentors for probationary ministers,
- e. in part-time stipendiary ministry.

12.4 It is recommended that part time ministers use similar criteria with regard to retirement as ministers who are on full stipend.

12.5 Part time congregational leaders after retirement can sometimes be usefully employed by small congregations as long as this is not detrimental to creating or continuing a full time ministry.

### **AFTER RETIREMENT:**

12.7 When a minister retires it is best not to attend the former church for at least a year; and the congregation should not expect attendance. This may be geographically difficult and in such circumstances attendance as a member of the general worshipping body is possible. Care should be exercised not to have any role in the ministerial input to the congregation.

12.8 Remembering that it is all too easy for members of the congregation to defer to the minister they have known for so long, not wishing to give the impression of excluding him or her from their concerns, the retired minister should take every care to ensure that he or she is not unwittingly usurping an authority or influence which rightly belongs to a successor.

12.9 It may be helpful if the newly appointed minister and management committee of the church meet with the retired minister after about 6 months of

## **TOWARDS RETIREMENT AND AFTER**

the new appointment to decide what help and assistance each party can give to the other. The retired minister should be encouraged to feel that they still have gifts to offer but that these need to be given in such a way that no threat is perceived by the new minister or the congregation.

12.10 As in ministry, the retired minister should refrain from public criticism of other ministers and from interfering with other ministries. This applies even where they have become a member of the congregation.

## **13. CONGREGATIONS AND STUDENT MINISTERS**

13.1 Practical training within a congregation is an essential element of ministerial and lay pastor training and churches are urged to offer church-based training. The training colleges provide supervision for student placements and have protocols for these. Students on placement should not become a covert candidating situation and churches should not feel it their right to keep students.

There are two types of student placement:

### **STUDENT PASTORATES.**

13.2 These students serve in churches without a minister and are under the supervision of their college Principal or Tutor. They are reimbursed by the church they serve, usually through the college. There are two formats:

- The ministry student that serves during college vacations.
- The ministry student that has a regular, though not full time, contact with a congregation throughout the year.

13.3 The expectations of both student and congregation must be fully explored and agreed before the pastorate starts.

13.4 Assessment of the work done by the student is essential and reports on this must be given to the Principal/Director or Tutor of the student's college at the end of the pastorate by (a) the student, and (b) the congregation or its managing committee. This report should not be the work of a single officer.

13.5 A well-planned student pastorate should be beneficial to both student and congregation. Whilst it is recognised that the income may be important for the student, this is a secondary consideration to the benefit to be gained from church-based training.

### **STUDENT INTERSHIPS**

13.6 These students serve in churches, or occasionally non-church situations, where there is a qualified person able and willing to supervise the student. Internships vary in length according to student need and the availability of appropriate supervision. The college and the body providing the internship should draw up a contract indicating the scope of the internship

13.7 Long internships can be up to one year in length, working with an experienced minister.

## CONGREGATIONS AND STUDENT MINISTERS

13.8 Short internships might be with bodies such as:

- Churches – providing exposure to the diversity within the Unitarian movement
- Caring institutions – hospital, hospice, disability unit, youth club, community centre etc.
- Media – training in media methods and skills
- Teaching – developing skills and relationships with children at primary/secondary level – preferably in religious studies.
- Self-help organisations – for example: Alcoholics/Gamblers Anonymous.

13.9 Both the supervisor and the student will report to the student's college Principal/Director or Tutor at the end of the internship.

## **14. PROBATION AND MENTORING**

Probation and mentoring offer a support mechanism that is in place during the student's training period and the first two years of ministry.

### **PROBATION**

14.1 Students are on probation throughout their training and for the first two years in ministry. Mentors provide regular reports to the Interview Panel to confirm that the mentoring process is active. Confidentiality between mentor and student/probationary minister is respected.

14.2 At the end of the probationary period the Interview Panel receives reports from the mentor, the congregation, and the District Association indicating whether or not the person concerned is acceptable for full status.

14.3 Predominantly positive feedback from these reports will warrant the minister's name being retained on the Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors and the status of probationer withdrawn

14.4 Predominantly negative feedback from these reports warrants returning the minister to the Interview Panel with the outcome being either to extend the probationary period, with additional training; or to remove from the Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors.

14.5 The final decision whether to accept, reject or ask for further training is that of the GA Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Ministry Strategy Group.

14.6 The stipend scale for new ministers is not affected by being designated probationary; neither does 'probationary' imply any inferior status.

14.7 Time spent in a position that does not involve major ministerial duties does not count as probationary service. Each case is considered on its merits by the Interview Panel with regard to length of probationary service required in the first ministry.

### **MENTORING**

14.8 On acceptance for training a student is assigned a mentor. The mentor will be an experienced minister with a substantial period of service in ministry, and an appreciation of the importance of the responsibilities detailed below. Exceptionally a layperson with considerable experience of church life and of the movement may act as a mentor.

# PROBATION AND MENTORING

14.9 The mentor offers the probationary student/minister:

- Support and advice
- Guidance on working practices in ministry

This is achieved through:

- Regular contact between mentor and probationary student/minister. This should occur at least four times a year.
- Mentors sending a half yearly report to the MCSO. More frequent reports may be necessary where there are areas of serious concern.

14.10 Mentors receive an honorarium (this may be subject to tax) and may claim reasonable expenses. The Ministry Strategy Group reviews the amounts paid from time to time.

# 15. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## **INTRODUCTION**

15.1 Much of the Guidelines for Partnership between Congregations and Ministers are about establishing good practice in running a ministry, including clear expectations from the outset and transparency and good communications during the ministry. These guidelines follow procedures used for employees, as these are considered best practice, but recognising that ministers and lay pastors are officeholders.

15.2 Problems, however, may arise from time to time. A grievance and a disciplinary procedure are outlined below, which should be used to address such problems.

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that may be raised by the minister.

Disciplinary procedures are procedures that are used to address concerns raised by the Congregation.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **Informal Procedure**

15.3 It is important that anyone who feels dissatisfied with a matter relating to their work should be able to resolve the issue as soon as possible. It is also important to distinguish between an informal and a formal approach to this resolution. The informal approach should nearly always be tried first, as it presents the opportunity for the matter to be resolved speedily and as amicably as possible (and does not prevent making a formal complaint later). A typical informal approach would be to speak to the Chair (or another trusted Officer if the complaint is about the Chair) to clarify what the concern is, to discuss why the Minister is dissatisfied, and to seek to achieve a resolution. There is no reason why the outcome of such an informal approach cannot be recorded to provide guidance for the future.

15.4 Independent mediation would normally happen as part of the Informal Procedure if it is viewed as desirable. If independent mediation either from within or from outside the denomination is judged appropriate, then the local District Association and/or the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches can be approached to suggest a mediator.

### **Formal Procedure**

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

15.5 If the Minister does conclude that the matter is most appropriately dealt with formally, he/she should inform the Secretary (or the Chair if the complaint is about the Secretary) in writing. A meeting of the Committee should be convened within ten days of receipt of the grievance. The Minister should be present at the meeting and may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union officer. The meeting will consider the information available and reach a conclusion as to whether action is necessary to rectify the grievance, and, if it is, what that action is. The Secretary (or the person substituting for the office) will confirm the outcome of the meeting to the Minister formally within seven days of the meeting. The Minister has the right to appeal against this decision by using the procedure a second time, and this decision is final.

If practically possible, two or three members of (the Committee of) the Congregation should exclude themselves from all involvement in the initial part of the procedure in order to be available to consider any appeal without the prejudice of previous involvement.

The Minister is expected to continue working normally while his/her grievance is being considered.

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

15.6 The Minister is expected to behave in a fully professional manner and not in such a way that might bring the Congregation or the denomination into disrepute.

#### **Informal Procedure**

15.7 It is important that any dissatisfaction with a matter relating to work should be resolved as soon as possible. It is also important to distinguish between an informal and a formal approach to this resolution. The informal approach should nearly always be tried first, as it presents the opportunity for the matter to be resolved speedily and as amicably as possible (and does not prevent making a formal complaint later). A typical informal approach would be for the Chair (or another trusted Officer) to speak to the Minister to clarify what the concern is, to discuss why the Congregation is dissatisfied, and to seek to achieve a resolution. However, on occasion, an informal approach is unsuccessful, and guidance on a formal procedure is therefore set out below.

15.8 Independent mediation would normally happen as part of the Informal Procedure if it is viewed as desirable. If independent mediation either from within or from outside the denomination is judged appropriate, then the local District Association and/or the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches can be approached to suggest a mediator.

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## Formal Procedure

15.9 The {Committee of the} Congregation should write to the Minister setting out the grounds for considering that disciplinary action might be appropriate and inviting him/her to an investigatory meeting.

15.10 An investigation should be held within ten days of this notification. It will normally be conducted by one or two members of (the Committee of) the Congregation, who will then exclude themselves from any future involvement with the disciplinary process. In the event that the Chair of the Congregation concludes that there is no need for formal action as a result of the investigation, the matter will be at an end. In the event that the Chair of the Congregation concludes that there is a need for formal action as a result of this investigation, a disciplinary meeting will be convened within a further ten days. At all meetings, the Minister should be present, and has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union officer. At the disciplinary meeting, the Minister will be able to respond to (the Committee of) the Congregation's concerns, to explain, and to make representations.

15.11 The Minister will be sent confirmation of the outcome of the disciplinary meeting within seven days of the meeting. The outcome may be a written warning or a final written warning, depending upon the seriousness of the allegations. In each case a warning has a "lifespan" of 12 months, after which it is to be disregarded for the purposes of being added to a previous warning. If a further warning is received in the "lifespan" of a previous final written warning, or if a final written warning is given in the "lifespan" of a written warning; the usual outcome is the ending of terms of engagement with notice. The minister will be advised that they can appeal against the decision by submitting their appeal in writing to the Secretary within seven days of receipt of confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

15.12 If the Minister does appeal, a further meeting will be convened within ten days of receipt of the appeal at which he/she may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union officer. The Minister will be given the opportunity at the meeting to present his/her reasons for believing the conclusion of the initial meeting to be wrong.

If practically possible, two or three members of (the Committee of) the Congregation should exclude themselves from all involvement in the investigation and the initial part of the procedure in order to be available to consider any appeal without the prejudice of previous involvement.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Minister will be sent confirmation of the outcome of the appeal meeting within seven days of the meeting.

15.13 Reasons which might give rise to the need for disciplinary measures include:

- Being a disruptive influence
- Incompetence
- Unreliable timekeeping or attendance
- Failure to comply with congregational or denominational procedures
- Rudeness or lack of consideration

It would be expected that a written warning would be issued in response to such reasons; recurrence may result in the termination of the engagement with notice.

15.14 Some concerns are so severe that they will result in termination of the contract without notice. Reasons that will result in the termination of engagement without notice include:

- Theft or dishonesty
- Serious breach of confidentiality
- Conduct during or outside working hours prejudicial to the interest or reputation of the Congregation or denomination. Guidance is given in Section 7 of Guidelines.
- Drunkenness or the use of illegal drugs
- Inappropriate use of the internet or email involving illegal or offensive material
- Misuse of the Congregation's time, money, equipment or other resources

15.15 No disciplinary sanction will be considered without applying the formal procedure described in 15.9 -15.12

### **ACTIONS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

15.16 When the Chief Officer/MCSO becomes aware of a serious situation of the type described in 15.6 to 15.15 above involving a Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader on the Rolls of the General Assembly, whether or not its impact is being considered by a congregation.

15.17 The MCSO will write to the Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader, setting out the grounds for considering that disciplinary action might be appropriate and inviting him/her to an investigatory meeting. It should be noted that Section 15.16-15.24 address a Minister/Lay Pastor/Lay Leader's position on the Roll of the General Assembly, and not their relationship with their congregation.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

15.18 An investigation should be held within ten days of this notification. The investigation will normally be conducted by two members of the Ministry Strategic Group accompanied by a member of the General Assembly's staff or a suitably experienced person nominated by the General Assembly. It may be appropriate to consider the contents of any prior investigation conducted by a congregation in the course of this investigation. In the event that they conclude that there is a need for formal action as a result of this investigation, a disciplinary meeting will be convened within a further ten days, at which the General Assembly will normally be represented by the Chair of the Ministry Strategic Group, an Executive Committee member and another Unitarian with specialist knowledge of the area being considered. They will normally be accompanied by the MCSO. At all meetings, the Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader should be present and has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union officer. At the disciplinary meeting, the Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader will be able to respond to the General Assembly's concerns, to explain, and to make representations.

15.19 The Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader will be sent confirmation of the outcome of the disciplinary meeting within seven days of the meeting. The outcome may be a written warning, final written warning or removal from the Roll, depending on the seriousness of the allegations and the previous history and timing of formal warnings. In each case, a warning has a "lifespan" of 12 months, after which it is to be disregarded for the purposes of being added to a previous warning. If a further warning is received in the "lifespan" of a previous final written warning, the usual outcome will be removal from the Roll. The Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader will be advised in writing that they can appeal against the decision by submitting their appeal in writing to the Chief Officer within seven days of receipt of confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

15.20 If the Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader does appeal, a further meeting will be convened within ten days of receipt of the appeal at which the General Assembly will normally be represented by the Convenor and two other members of the Executive Committee, none of whom have previously been involved with the issue, normally accompanied by the Chief Officer. The Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader may be accompanied at the meeting by a colleague or a trade union officer. The Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader will be given the opportunity at this meeting to present their reasons for believing the conclusion of the initial meeting to be wrong. The Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader will be sent confirmation of the outcome of the appeal meeting within seven days of the meeting.

15.21 Reasons which might give rise to the need for disciplinary measures include:

- Being a disruptive influence

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Incompetence
- Unreliable timekeeping or attendance
- Failure to comply with congregational or denominational procedures
- Rudeness or lack of consideration

It would be expected that a written warning would be issued in response to such reason; recurrence may result in removal from the Roll.

15.22 Some concerns are so severe that they will result in removal from the Roll. These concerns include:

- Theft or dishonesty
- Serious breach of confidentiality
- Conduct during or outside working hours prejudicial to the interest or reputation of the congregation or denomination. Guidance is given in Section 7 of Guidelines.
- Drunkenness or the use of illegal drugs
- Inappropriate use of the internet or email involving illegal or offensive material
- Misuse of the congregation or denomination's time, money, equipment or other resources

15.23 No disciplinary sanction will be considered without applying the formal procedure described in 15.17-15.20

15.24 It would be a matter for the congregation to consider the potential impact of any removal from the Roll on its relationship with the Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader.

## **16. SUPPORT**

### **CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION AND MINISTRY**

16.1 The Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established) is responsible to the Executive Committee. It is available not only in a conflict situation but also in a supporting role. It encourages congregations and ministers to consult with them if problems or issues can be identified at an early stage.

16.2 The panel is available to congregations which need external support with issues:

- a. in their congregational life, or
- b. In their relationship with their minister;

and to ministers who face difficulties in their relationship with congregations.

16.3 An appointed representative of the congregation or the minister should approach the Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established) through the GA Ministry and Congregational Support Officer.

16.4 Approaches from both congregations and ministers will be taken in strict confidence.

16.5 It is hoped that if one party wishes to bring in the Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established), the other party would readily agree.

### **THE PROCESS**

16.6 The first step is for the issue to be discussed with the Convenor of the Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established), contactable through the GA Chief Officer.

16.7 The second step is to invite the contact person to discuss the matter further with a representative of the Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established). The matter could be resolved at this point, or the panel representative could choose to consult with other members of the panel.

16.8 If further action is thought necessary, two or more members of the Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established) (or one or more persons selected for their expertise specific to the issue) would meet the minister and/or the congregation in order to advise and help with the issue. At least one member of the Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established) would be present at the meeting.

## **REVIEW AND SUPPORT**

16.9 The Convenor of the Review and Support Panel (currently being re-established) is responsible for any follow-up action required. Only the general nature of the problem would be reported to the Ministry Strategy Group, unless further action is required from the MSG (e.g. disciplinary action).

# 17. MINISTRY AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## INTRODUCTION

17.1 The GA acts as a facilitating body promoting and encouraging good practice in congregational life and ministry. The GA does not employ or appoint ministers or other leaders to congregations, but it does endeavour to maintain standards in ministry by maintaining Rolls with agreed levels of competence. The following are the current Rolls:

The GA Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors  
The GA Roll of Lay Leaders  
The GA Roll of Lay Worship Leaders

## THE GA ROLL OF MINISTERS AND LAY PASTORS

17.2 To be added to the GA Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors a person must have:

- satisfactorily completed an agreed course of training,
- been approved by the Interview Panel,
- gained the consent of the GA Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Interview Panel.

17.3 Acceptance on to the GA Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors is marked by a short ceremony of 'welcome and recognition' at the GA Annual Meetings.

17.4 The GA Directory lists all ministers who are on the GA Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors, and through a system of prefix letters indicates their current status on the roll. Thus:

No prefix	On the GA Roll and serving a congregation(s) approved by or connected with the GA, or employed in another recognised post.
Prefix: c	On the GA Roll, but for reasons acceptable to the Interview Panel, not available for a ministerial position or other recognised post.
Prefix: N	An ordained minister of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland in a ministerial post or retired while staying in Ireland and on the Roll of the GA.
Prefix: p	On the GA Roll and serving probationary years
Prefix: r	Retired minister on the GA Roll
Prefix: LP	Lay Pastor

# **MINISTRY AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## **RETENTION ON THE GA ROLL OF MINISTERS AND LAY PASTORS**

17.5 Those who are deemed not available for a ministerial position should have their cases reviewed, from time to time, by the Interview Panel.

17.6 Ministers will have their names removed from the Roll if:

1. they have ceased to hold an active appointment for three years, and
2. can not be contacted by the Interview Panel and/or GA Chief Officer, or
3. do not respond within six months after registered mail is sent to their last registered address.

17.7 Appeal against removal from the Roll may be made to the GA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will appoint a small tribunal, including a representative of the Ministerial Fellowship, to consider the case.

17.8 Application for reinstatement at a later date will be considered by the Interview Panel. The Interview Panel may be part of this process.

## **RESUMPTION OF CONGREGATION BASED MINISTRY**

17.9 Taking up a ministerial position after an extended period (3+ years) away from such a position requires initially an interview with the Interview Panel. This applies whether or not the minister has been removed from the Roll. The Interview Panel will determine if and what up-dating training may be required. A short self-assessment form may be required from the minister to inform the decision of the Interview Panel.

## **VALIDATING QUALIFICATIONS**

17.10 No qualifications are printed in the GA Directory against a minister's name unless approved by the Interview Panel and documentary evidence supplied.

17.11 The GA uses the list of approved qualifications normally accepted in higher education as its way of ensuring that the GA's name is only associated with qualifications of an acceptably high standard.

## **MINISTERS FROM OVERSEAS UNITARIAN OR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MOVEMENTS**

17.12 A document is available from the GA Ministry and Congregational Support Officer giving the detailed arrangements for ministers from overseas Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist movements who wish to minister to British Unitarian congregations. In general, such appointments are welcomed as enriching our

# MINISTRY AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Unitarian witness. The policy is designed to ensure that the incoming minister quickly assimilates the ethos and traditions of British Unitarianism.

## MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

17.13 A document is available from the GA Ministry and Congregational Support Officer giving the detailed arrangements for ministers from other denominations who wish to minister to British Unitarian congregations. The main points of this document are:

- Ministers must firstly be seen by the Interview Panel and meet the same requirements expected of a standard entry candidate for the Unitarian ministry.
- If the Interview Panel approves, they must then complete a familiarisation programme with the Unitarian ministry. The Interview Panel will take into consideration the interests and needs of the candidate when determining which of the following four programmes is appropriate:
  - A one-year special training programme at a recognised college for the training of British Unitarian ministers. The course of study will have an emphasis on the practical elements and practice of British Unitarian ministry and the history and culture of the British Unitarian movement. There will be a substantial amount of work within Unitarian congregations.
  - An internship with a Unitarian minister for a minimum of one year. Substantial practical experience is to be supplemented with a programme of reading and self-study on Unitarian history and heritage. The Unitarian minister acts as mentor and guide.
  - An agreed part-time two-year programme of study and involvement with British Unitarian congregations under the supervision of an approved mentor. This option is designed for those wishing to continue in other employment or activity.
  - A probationary ministry with a British Unitarian congregation for a period of two years with an approved mentor and a course of study agreed with the Interview Panel.

**Note:** The costs of fulfilling the above requirement are the responsibility of the candidate.

17.14 After the candidate has successfully completed one of the familiarisation programmes they will be seen again by the Interview Panel who will determine if they should be admitted to the GA Roll on a probationary status.

## **MINISTRY AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

17.15 Ministers from other denomination or religious movements are disqualified from consideration for addition to the GA Roll if they seek or make arrangements, independently of the Interview Panel, for any ministry in this country normally served by ministers from the GA Roll. The exception to this is approved interim ministries arranged by the Interview Panel. A minister who serves an interim ministry is also disqualified if there is an attempt to be appointed to the ministry where they have served as interim minister.

### **THE GA ROLL OF LAY LEADERS**

17.16 A document is available from the GA Ministry and Congregational Support Officer giving the arrangements for admitting and training candidates for the roll of Lay Leader (see Appendix 5). It gives detailed criteria for the selection of candidates, the procedure for application and an overview of the training and supervision that is provided.

### **THE GA ROLL OF LAY WORSHIP LEADERS** (formerly Lay Preachers)

17.17 Lay Worship Leaders undertake a 'Worship Studies course'. This course has both a practical and theoretical content. Those who complete the whole course satisfactorily are included in the Roll of Lay Worship Leaders. Details of this course are available from the GA Ministry and Congregational Support Officer.

# APPENDIX 1

## APPLICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE MINISTERIAL VACANCIES LIST

**Name of Congregation or Group of Congregations:**.....

.....  
*(If a group, or more than one congregation, state the names of each congregation.)*

**Who is empowered to make the appointment?**

.....  
*(State if the congregation, committee, joint committee or trustees.)*

**Name of person submitting this form:**

.....

**Capacity of person submitting this form:** .....(e.g. Secretary)

**Address:**

.....

**Postcode:**.....

**Telephone:** ..... **email:** .....

**Will the Congregation or Group of Congregations pay the stipend and expenses according to the stipend scales, allowances and expenses detailed in the current Stipend Review Committee Report (as adopted at the General Assembly's Annual Meetings)?**

**Yes:** .....

**No:** .....

*(Tick as appropriate. If no, state how and why the offer may vary. If the stipend and/or conditions are superior to the above scales, answer "Yes", but be sure to build them into the costings overleaf. If this ministry is not full-time, please confirm the proportion of full time.)*

**Can the Congregation or Group of Congregations sustain the stipend and expenses of this ministry for the foreseeable future: (Please complete the financial section overleaf before you complete this question.)**

**Yes:** .....

**No:** .....

*(Congregations and Groups of Congregations must ensure that they have secured adequate funding before they advertise on the Ministerial Vacancies List.)*

**Has the Congregation or Group of Congregations appointed a selection panel to deal with the interview process and have each of its members read**

# APPENDIX 1

**the procedures for fair selection outlined in *Guidelines for Partnership between Congregations and Ministers?***

**Yes:** .....

**No:** .....

App1.1

*(The Ministry Commission strongly recommends that the selection panel has met and understood the recruitment procedures before the issue of an advertisement on the Ministerial Vacancies List. The Ministry Commission will be pleased to provide advice and clarification of the procedures, when requested.)*

## Financial Information

**Please state the financial package on offer:**

Stipend	£	
Housing Allowance	£	<i>(Omit if a manse is to be provided)</i>
Cost of Manse	£	<i>(Omit if a manse is not provided)</i>
Pension Fund	£	<i>(Currently 8.5% each)</i>
Contributions		
National Insurance	£	
Expenses	£	_____
		_____

**How will this package be funded?**

	Church 1	Church 2	Church 3
Live income			
Investments			
District Association			
Sustentation Fund			
Other sources			
<b>Total £</b>	£	£	£

**Please confirm the status of the external funding:** *(Delete as applicable)*

District Association: *promised/applied for/hoped for*

## **APPENDIX 1**

Sustentation Fund: *promised/applied for/hoped for*

Other Sources: *promised/applied for/hoped for*

I certify that, to the best of my belief, the above information is correct and I hereby request that the Ministry Commission places an advertisement on its next Ministerial Vacancies List.

## APPENDIX 2

### RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION FOR MINISTERIAL TRAINING

#### 1. APPLYING FOR TRAINING

1.1 Applicants, naturally, come mostly from Unitarian congregations. Ministers and lay people should encourage any suitable candidate expressing an interest in ministerial training.

1.2 A recruitment leaflet is available to supplement local guidance and encouragement

1.3 A notice inviting formal application for Ministerial Training is advertised in *The Inquirer* in July/August each year.

1.4 Applicants are sent:

- An application form
- A copy of *Guidelines for Partnership between Congregations and Ministers*
- A copy of 'Procedures when applying for entry to the list of Ministers' (extract)

#### 2. SELECTION

##### Interviewing

2.1 The Interview Panel (IP) is part of the Ministry Commission (MC) and consists of six persons of which three would normally be:

The Principal, Unitarian College, Manchester (UCM),  
The Chaplain Tutor, Manchester Academy and Harris College, Oxford (MAHC)

A representative of the Ministerial Fellowship  
(*The two Colleges may appoint another representative responsible for training*)

The other three panel members are chosen by the Ministry Commission for their appropriate skills and to give a balanced and representative group. One of the six members must be the Chair of the Ministry Commission. The Secretary of the Ministry Commission will attend in an administrative capacity.

2.2 Some continuity should be maintained as panel members change. One member should be identified as the liaison person between the Interview Panel

## APPENDIX 2

and the Ministry Commission. When a Welsh speaking applicant is interviewed the panel should have a Welsh speaker, either by membership or co-option.

2.3 The Interview Panel reviews all written applications and decides which candidates should be interviewed.

2.4 Interviewing, usually at Oxford in January, is over a 2-3 day period with accommodation made available at MAHC.

2.5 Assessment methods include:

- Two-to-one and small group interviews
- Prepared worship of about 15 minutes
- General discussion on relevant issues and topics

2.6 The Interview Panel make their decision principally on the applicant's qualities and performance, but consideration is also given to the wider picture of ministerial supply and demand.

2.7 When a candidate is accepted for training, recommendations are made as to length and nature of training, the college(s) in which this will take place, and financial arrangements

### **Criteria for acceptance for training**

2.8 Candidates will be assessed on the following understandings, qualities and awarenesses:

#### **Unitarian:**

Grasp of Unitarian ethos

Practical, participating knowledge of the movement

Evidence of support and encouragement from a local congregation and/or District

Practical experience of the life of a Unitarian congregation

Commitment to the objects of the GA

#### **Personal:**

Sense of vocation, motivation, 'call'

Spiritual depth

Concept of the ministerial role

Capacity for self-understanding and self-awareness

Ability to communicate

Ability to relate well and show concern for others

Stability in relationships

Leadership skills

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### **Academic:**

A good level of general education – with documentary evidence  
Evidence of academic potential  
Willingness to pursue recommended courses

2.9 The following are desirable qualities and experiences:

Experience as a Lay Worship Leader  
Knowledge of current theological issues  
Previous secular experience  
Broad cultural background

### **Candidates not recommended for training**

2.10 The Interview Panel decides in each case what is appropriate to say to candidates not accepted for training.

2.11 The applicant's local or sponsoring minister should have a continuing pastoral role, from before to after the interview. They should discuss expectations, strengths and weaknesses, so that reasons for non-acceptance can be understood and disappointment mitigated.

2.12 The Interview Panel will contact directly the applicant's sponsoring/counselling minister if it is thought that this will be helpful.

## **3. OTHER DUTIES OF THE INTERVIEW PANEL**

3.1 The Interview Panel interviews all ministerial students during their final academic year. After this interview a recommendation, or otherwise, regarding admission to the Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors is made to the GA Executive Committee. The Interview Panel may also recommend further training before and/or after admission.

3.2 If a newly qualified minister does not obtain a ministerial post for more than two years they are interviewed by the Interview Panel to determine what further training may be necessary. The minister completes a short assessment form to aid this process.

3.3 The Ministry Commission may ask the Interview Panel to interview a minister if:

- a. a minister wishes to return to active ministry after an interval
- b. a minister wishes to have their name reinstated on the Roll after an interval

## APPENDIX 2

- c. suitability for ministry has been questioned by a legitimate body.

The Interview Panel will make its recommendations to the Ministry Commission.

3.4 The Interview Panel will interview any student who is required to discontinue training.

3.5 The Ministry Commission may ask the Interview Panel to interview ministers at the end of the probationary period in their first ministry. This will normally only happen if concerns about suitability and performance have been raised, or noted through the mentor reports.

3.6 Ministers who take a recognised position in the denomination before accepting a congregational ministry must accept probationary status at the start of their first congregational ministry. The Ministry Commission determines the length of this probation.

# APPENDIX 3

## TRAINING FOR MINISTRY

### Introduction

The aim is to produce ministers who will provide effective leadership for our congregations and the wider movement. Congregational needs vary, but ministers are likely to play significant roles in worship, spiritual sustenance, pastoral care and religious education for all ages. Ministers will witness to, and facilitate a greater awareness of the Unitarian ethos in the wider community.

### Course Content

The following areas, not in any rank order, are covered in training:

#### Academic

- Theology – historical and contemporary
- Church history
- Unitarian tradition and ethos
- Biblical studies
- World Religions

#### Practical

- Conduct of worship, liturgical studies, hymnody
- Pastoral care and counselling
- Chaplaincy
- Facilitating religious education for all ages
- Working with young people
- Congregational dynamics and leadership, congregational development
- Church administration
- Personal communication: voice production, public speaking, using technology
- Media and public relations
- Ministerial ethics and etiquette, G.A. guidelines

#### Personal

- Time management and administration of own affairs
- Self-assessment and self-awareness
- Leadership skills and the ability to delegate
- Teamwork and the exercise of authority

Placement See section 13

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## Teaching Methods

Lectures, seminars, reading assignments, worship assignments, role play.

## Assessment

Essays, church based practical assignments  
Continuous assessment in college and placement

## Course Duration

The normal length of training is two years full-time equivalent, and preferably should include a residential component.

Exemption from some aspects of training may be given for students partially trained in another denomination or having other relevant training/experience (e.g. degree in religious studies).

The exact circumstances of every student, including the level for which they are accepted for training (Minister, Lay Pastor, Lay Leader) are considered carefully in order to determine the length and the nature of the training required.

## Conditions applying to training

Students are on probation throughout their course.

If a student makes unsatisfactory progress they may be required to discontinue training. This is made clear before entry to the course.

When a student is required to discontinue studies they will be interviewed by the Interview Panel after consultation between the college and the Ministry Commission. The student has a right of appeal to the Ministry Commission and may be referred to the GA Executive Committee. In addition each college has its own procedure.

## Finance

Grants are available to help towards the cost of the personal maintenance of students.

Colleges normally pay approved tuition fees.

## **APPENDIX 3**

Some trusts and funds, including The Ministerial Students Fund, may provide grants for ministerial students. The GA Chief Executive and the colleges can advise on these.

Students who voluntarily discontinue training or leave the GA ministry within five years after an initial appointment are expected to repay a proportion, not exceeding 50% of the cost of their training. This is a moral obligation and explained in detail on the initial application form.

# APPENDIX 4

## TRAINING FOR LAY PASTORATE

### Introduction

The aim is to provide effective leaders for small congregations where part-time ministry is appropriate. Lay Pastors should be able to meet the needs for worship, pastoral care and religious education, and understand the dynamics of small congregations. Individual courses may vary according to the availability of training in each locality. The following gives an indication of the minimum requirement in each topic.

### Academic

1. Biblical studies – background, history, methodology, Jewish and Christian scriptures (ten hours plus written work).
2. Church history and Unitarian history (ten hours plus written work).
3. Introduction to Christian theology (eight hours plus written work).
4. Unitarian theology and ethos, including for example social responsibility work (ten hours plus written work).
5. Conduct of worship including preaching and rites of passage (twenty hours plus four practical sessions).
6. Pastoral counselling (eight hours).
7. World faiths in Britain today (eight hours).
8. Congregational dynamics and leadership, church administration, outreach and publicity, congregational development (ten hours).
9. Religious Education for adults, children and young people, child protection issues (six hours).

### Practical

Supervised experience as assistant pastor (under guidance of Minister or experienced Lay Pastor) equivalent of at least fourteen days.

### Personal

Self-awareness and self-assessment.  
Administration of own affairs, time-management.  
Teamwork and the exercise of authority.  
Leadership skills and the ability to delegate.

### Assessment

As ministry guidelines.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Course Duration**

One-year full time equivalent, usually two years part-time. Exemptions and partial exemptions may be granted on the basis of previous learning and/or experience.

### **Conditions applying to training**

As on ministry training guidelines

### **Finance**

Limited grants are available to help towards the cost of personal maintenance of students. The GA Chief Executive and the colleges can advise about trust funds that may help.

Colleges normally pay approved tuition fees.

Students who voluntarily discontinue training or leave the GA Lay Pastorate within five years after an initial appointment are expected to repay a portion, not exceeding 50% of the cost of their training. This is a moral obligation and explained in detail on the initial application form.

# APPENDIX 5

## TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERSHIP

### Criteria for candidates:

1. Must have been an active member of a Unitarian congregation (or congregations) for a minimum of three years.
2. Must have a knowledge of and commitment to Unitarian traditions and ethos.
3. Must be endorsed by the congregation to be served, the district association, a member of the GA Roll (i.e. a Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader) and at least one other referee.
4. Must have ability and experience in leading Unitarian worship.
5. Must have integrity and honesty and have undergone the appropriate Criminal Records Bureau check.
6. Must have leadership and other practical (especially inter-personal) skills associated with life in a small congregation.
7. Must recognise her/his accountability to the congregation and the wider Unitarian movement.
8. Should enjoy a state of health appropriate to the demands of Lay Leadership.
9. The age criteria applied to Ministry and Lay Pastor Roll entry does not necessarily apply to Lay Leadership Roll entry.
10. After the normal retirement age contracts or renewals of leadership positions should be on a short-term basis only.

### Procedure for application

This is similar to that for ministerial training (see appendix 2). The completed lay leader application form should be submitted by 30 September in any year.

References will then be sought from the following:

The congregation to be served

The local district association

A referee who is a member of a GA Roll (Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Leader)

An additional referee

Short listed candidates will be invited for interview in January.

The Interview Panel will recommend the most appropriate course of training for an individual Lay Leader applicant.

### Training and supervision

1. The training requirements will be partly based upon the requirements for Lay Pastorate training (see appendix 4).

## APPENDIX 5

2. Where possible, the Interview Panel will assign a successful candidate (herein after referred to as the trainee Lay Leader) to Harris Manchester College or Unitarian College, Manchester. If this is not possible, the Panel will recruit a Tutor in consultation with the trainee Lay Leader and the Ministry Commission.
3. The Interview Panel will be responsible for informing the Tutor of the requirements of the training syllabus and also any specific needs of the trainee Lay Leader.
4. The Tutor will arrange an initial meeting with the trainee Lay Leader and agree a programme of meetings and methods for tuition and liaison.
5. The Tutor will monitor the trainee Lay Leader's progress and give advice, encouragement and feedback as appropriate.
6. During the training period the Tutor will encourage the trainee Lay Leader to attend or participate in recognised denominational training activities and events.
7. The Tutor will report progress to the Interview Panel at six monthly intervals
8. The Tutor will issue a final report to the Interview Panel when two years have elapsed provided that the training syllabus has been completed.
9. At this point the Interview Panel will obtain verification from the congregation(s) and district association that they are satisfied with the integrity and competence of the trainee Lay Leader and that they too recommend him/her for inclusion on the GA Roll of Lay Leaders.
10. The Interview Panel then hold a final interview with the trainee Lay Leader provided that the training is complete and the Tutor, congregation and district association each recommend that the Lay Leader be considered for entry onto the GA Roll of Lay Leaders.
11. The Interview Panel and the Ministry Commission will, if satisfied, recommend the Lay Leader to the Executive Committee for inclusion on the Roll.
12. After entry on the Roll, the Lay Leader is subject to the same mentoring and probationary arrangements as Ministers and Lay Pastors.
13. After entry on the Roll of Lay Leaders the qualified Lay Leader should take advantage of opportunities for professional development, for example with the Unitarian Association of Lay Leaders (UALL).

### **Finance**

1. The Interview Panel will determine the cost of providing the training. This cost shall include the fees and costs incurred by the Tutor.
2. The Interview Panel will meet with the trainee Lay Leader and negotiate an appropriate contribution to the cost of providing the training. Where appropriate, contributions will be sought from the congregation and/or district association.

## APPENDIX 6

**Extracts from  
AGM5/91**

Report and Recommendations to the  
1991 General Assembly Meetings  
from the GA Council.

### **GA Policy on Sabbatical Leave**

1. At the 1989 General Assembly Meetings the following resolution was passed:

"That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the report on Ministerial Training and directs the Council to set up a working party to further the financial and other implications of sabbatical leave for ministers and to present firm proposals for consideration at the next Annual Meetings."

2. The concept of "Sabbatical Leave" is much in line with other professions, especially University teachers, as a "professional role expectation" - a "space for renewal" (recreation). In the case of ministers of religion their special roles may demand "spiritual renewal" as much as intellectual refreshment or physical/health improvement. Indeed, it is emphasised that professional and personal counselling are best met by a proper holiday or even professional psycho-therapy, etc. Sabbatical Leave should not be confused with or seen as "an extended holiday" or as a euphemism for "sick leave".
3. It is important to distinguish clearly between Sabbatical Leave and other long-term, non-holiday breaks from service. Sabbatical Leave must not be taken concurrent with ministerial functions and commitments but is here understood to mean a complete break from any ministerial duties during the period of leave. "Study Leave", however, need not necessarily imply this complete break.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The General Assembly Council recommends:-

- (a) That all GA ministries should be based on Letter of Contract / Agreement which are reviewed as a matter of standard practice every three or five years, and these should include a right to Sabbatical Leave under the terms outlined below.
- (b) That all congregations should review now or at their earliest opportunity (e.g. the anniversary of the ministry) the Terms of

## APPENDIX 6

Appointment with a view to including Sabbatical Leave entitlement. [If these recommendations are adopted as GA policy, the model Terms of Appointment in "Guidelines" will be amended accordingly and strongly commended to all congregations.]

### App6.1

- (c) That Sabbatical Leave entitlement should be two weeks for each completed year of ministry, which would not be transferable, i.e. the minister would not accrue entitlement to take with him/her into a new ministry. The congregation(s) could, however, take previous ministerial experience into account when arrangements for Sabbatical Leave are made. Sabbatical Leave may not be taken before two years in ministry have been completed.
- (d) That Lay Pastors and Lay Leaders be afforded similar rights by their employing congregations and along similar lines.

## 5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the Sabbatical it is expected that the congregations would continue to be responsible for paying stipend, housing allowance (where applicable), and continuing expenses. [Some congregations and ministers may want to provide for these expenses by saving for them beforehand].

- 6. Although the working party was unable to formulate an outline model for planning a Sabbatical Leave and the arrangements to be made in the minister's absence, such a model would be drawn up for inclusion in any GA policy.
- 7. The Council recognises that the above recommendations cannot be required either of congregations or those ministers who object to written contractual agreements. However, it is hoped that the present overwhelming preference among our ministers for firm written agreements and the majority call from Ministerial Fellowship members for a policy on Sabbatical Leave will be noted by all.