

Ministerial Development Review

A Simple Guide

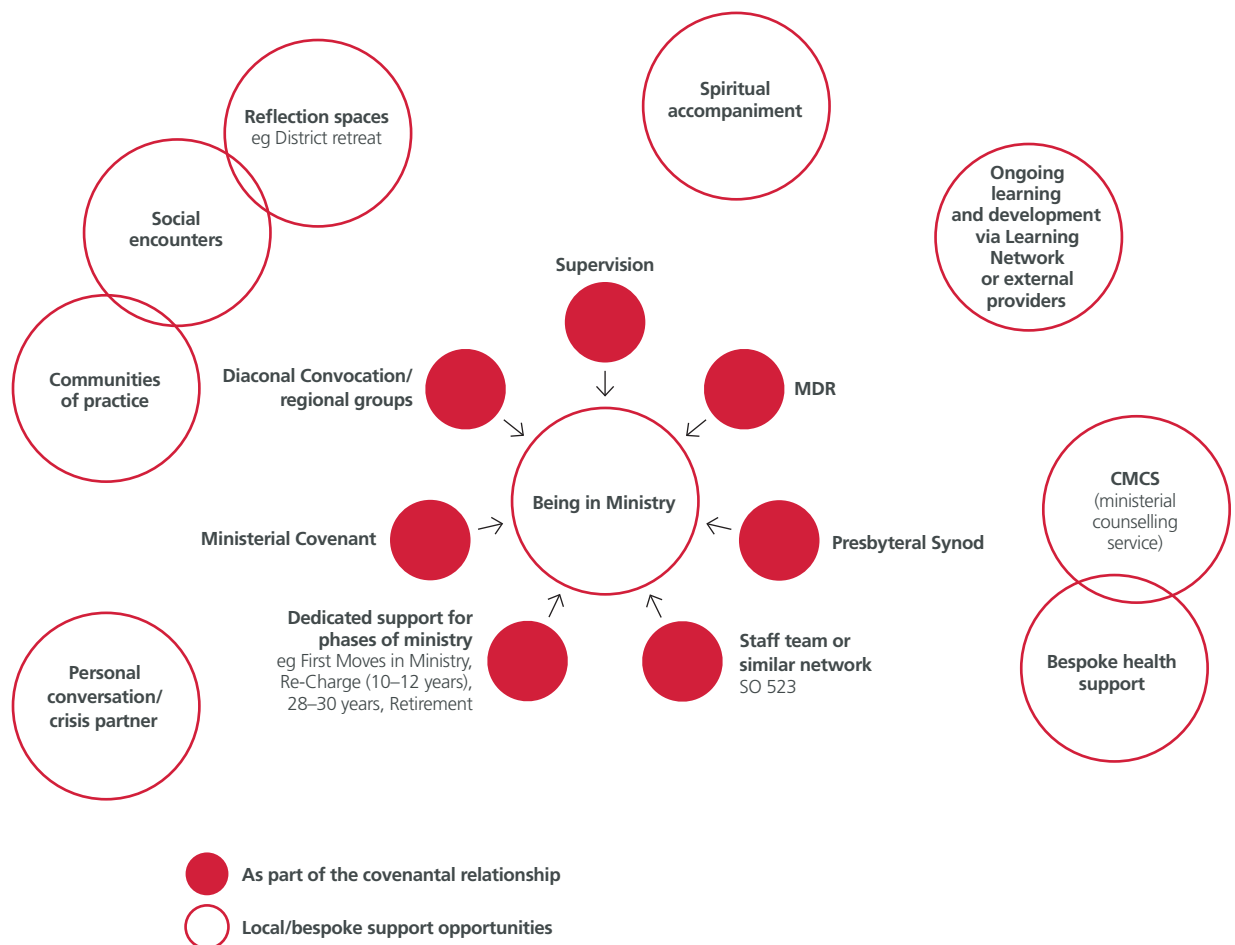


The Ministerial Development Review Process

Ministerial Development Review (MDR) is part of a suite of support and accountability tools for ministers within the Church. This support is built on the foundation of the covenant relationship that shapes ordained ministry within Methodism.

This guide helps describe the place of MDR within this suite of support, its distinctive role and how best to approach its associated processes.

Ministry support and accountability suite



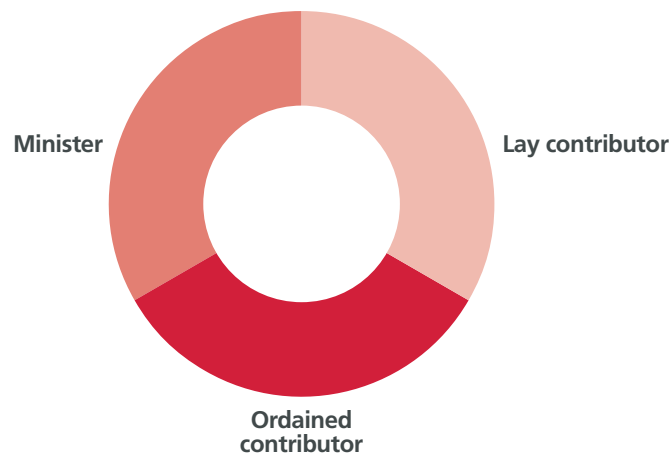
Requirements for MDR in CPD (who undertakes it and when) can be found in SO 743

Built on covenant and partnership

MDR is rooted in the covenant relationship between the Conference and its ordained ministers. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for structured reflection on ministry within individual contexts.

The MDR process is nested in partnership, in which a minister is supported by both a lay and an ordained contributor. Together they form a triplet specifically for the purpose.

The triplet model



The ordained contributor will usually be the minister in oversight. For example, unless agreed otherwise, in the case of a local circuit minister that would be the superintendent or, in the case of a superintendent, the district chair. There may be some exceptions, for example in large circuits/districts where it is not practical to expect the superintendent/chair to be involved in MDR for every minister, or where there are circumstances that might limit the work of MDR. Whoever it is, the ordained contributor must have an understanding of the relevant ministry context and be able to engage with the particular experience of ministry within that context.

The lay contributor will be chosen by the minister engaged in their own review. They will be someone embedded in the local context, with the skills to guide and encourage reflection on the feedback received by the minister. Typically, they will be responsible for convening the meetings and prompting the different stages and elements of the process that are outlined later in this guide.

Essential skills, for both lay and ordained contributors, include the abilities to:

- show empathy and tact
- build rapport
- probe and listen carefully
- give and receive feedback well
- engage in constructive dialogue
- summarise and analyse potentially complex hopes, goals and needs
- practise discretion and observe confidentiality
- display a collaborative approach.

(More advice and support around role outlines and skill sets is available in [Appendix 1](#).)

The annual conversation

The main feature of MDR is an annual opportunity for the minister to meet within their triplet to consider the subtleties of ministry and discern God's voice; to look, with others who know the landscape, at how ministry is exercised effectively and appropriately in that place, within the parameters laid down by the Church. Therefore, the conversation will include consideration of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Strategy and any learning from it, as well as the Ministerial Covenant and the Competencies for Ministry. The aim is to encourage continuous improvement and discernment in any given sphere of ministry.

For MDR to be a fruitful experience it needs to be:

- enfolded in an ethos of prayer and trust
- planted on a firm foundation of local and contextual feedback
- interwoven with the supervision process
- mindful of the Ministerial Covenant
- a place where ministry in all its complexity can be both celebrated and renewed.

How the MDR process sits alongside supervision

Supervision, as outlined in the [Supervision Policy of the Church](#) (2021-26), offers an ongoing, dedicated space for a minister to reflect on experiences in their ministry and to formulate responses to them. The intention of such regular and focused reflection is to support a change of culture in the life of the Church – from one in which practice is often isolated and vulnerable to one of accountability, support and increased safety.

MDR focuses more closely on specific aspects of ministry in context. It considers areas of ministry where a closer look can be taken at a particular element of the work. Ministers can often be embedded in a context for several years, and MDR offers the opportunity to look at aspects of the work over a period of time – with a different focus at each review. The elements of ministry that are selected for review should be carefully drawn from themes discussed during supervision (or indeed those noticeably not discussed) and/or expectations outlined in the Ministerial Covenant, the Competencies for Ministry and those arising from the JDS Strategy.

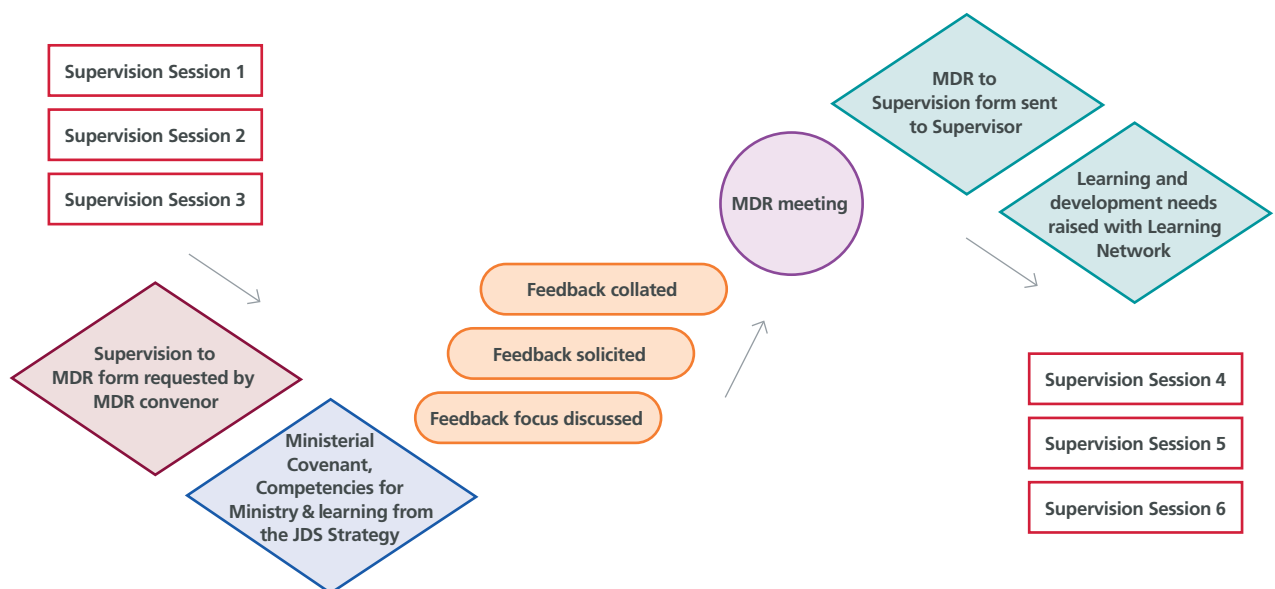
Requirements for MDR in CPD (who undertakes it and when) can be found in SO 743

Supervision and MDR, then, are interwoven, with subject areas and ideas for development passing between the two. Together they offer a springboard to new thinking and approaches to ministry. They ensure that the needs of the minister and those of the Church are met in a way that offers support and accountability.

The relationship between these two processes of ministerial reflection is aided by the provision of some bespoke forms (see [Appendix 2](#)).

This diagram shows what the supervision process can look like. (The point at which MDR is placed within the supervision cycle is decided according to local agreement.)

Supervision and MDR – example process



The process explained in more detail

Information exchange

During the supervision process, at a point in the year when a number of sessions have taken place, a report is prepared by the supervisor for the MDR Team and sent to the minister and the ordained and lay contributors. It is confidential to them. The report contains an overview of the subjects and issues discussed in recent supervision meetings and therefore, by default, the things that have not been covered. As the convenor, the lay contributor requests the form at the most appropriate point in the year to allow for all the elements of the process to take place within a suitable timeframe.

Preliminary meeting

The MDR triplet meets to consider the form and any other reflective work being undertaken by the minister. It will review the Ministerial Covenant, the Competencies for Ministry and any relevant learning from the JDS Strategy to ascertain what the topic of focus for the MDR will be. This will be a short phone or video meeting. Its purpose is to agree:

- a focus for the MDR in that given year
- the type of feedback to be solicited (verbal or written), who that will be obtained from and how
- the mechanisms for collating and distilling the responses
- an appropriate review date, mutually agreed venue, chairing and note-taking roles.

Feedback

360-degree feedback is obtained and collated by the lay contributor. It is sought from local church members and peers, as appropriate to the topic. The minister in oversight will also be invited to offer feedback on the topic. Usually it is pre-agreed that the collated feedback will be anonymised and summarised, except for that given by the minister in oversight.

Giving feedback is an important part of MDR but can often be seen as difficult for those involved. It can therefore be helpful to offer some guidance when requesting feedback. The most valuable feedback avoids generalisations and over-simplified views. For those completing it, the [MDR Request for Feedback form](#) should help to make this clear.

A useful approach to offering clear and specific feedback is the Action–Impact–Desired outcome (AID) model, developed by Max Landsberg. It encourages those offering feedback to concentrate on specific actions or situations and describe how these made an impact on them. It then invites the commentator to share what they think a person might do as a consequence.

For example:

During a recent Church Council meeting you raised your voice. I found that a bit difficult to handle and it put me off wanting to join in the conversation. Maybe you could think about what prompted you to do that and consider your approach to any complex conversations that happen in the future?

Or:

This week I came to the communion service and you led a beautifully inclusive service with the children. I felt it was sensitive and well thought through. It made me see the sacrament as extra special, especially as my grandchildren were with me. Please continue to offer communion in this way.

You can find much more about the AID theory here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ve7EaSwW2Bw

Receiving feedback is also a very important part of the equation. This can be difficult if comments and thoughts are not what you want to hear or if you find praise awkward to handle. A helpful technique is to follow the Accept–Clarify–Thanks (ACT) model. This recognises and accepts the feedback from any given individual, offers a way to seek further facts or clarification about the impact it had on a person, and then offer thanks for the comments offered. It also ensures that any kind of feedback, including that which might be perceived as negative, receives appropriate attention and can be used as a basis for development and improvement.

For example:

It's really useful to hear your views. Can you help me with some of the details? What did you see that led you to feel like this? Can you explain a little more... Thank you I will take away all you've said and think about it further.

You can find out more about the ACT theory here: www.td.org/insights/a-c-t-3-tips-for-receiving-feedback

Other short videos on the subject of feedback, created by the Connexional Team, can be found here:

- *The Skill of Giving Effective Feedback:* bit.ly/2icc94W
- *The Skill of Receiving Feedback:* bit.ly/2zDsoBq

These ideas are offered as suggestions to help with this important element of the process.

Preparation and reflection

In parallel to feedback from other people, the minister also reflects on the chosen area of focus. Although it's not a requirement to complete it, the [Areas for Reflection form](#) is available to prompt thinking on this.

The MDR meeting

The meeting is held in a non-public, neutral space and embedded in prayer and theological reflection. The minister is invited to offer their reflections on the chosen aspect of ministry in context, and the broader feedback is carefully reviewed.

A meeting agenda might look like this:

(Please note, it is anticipated that the meeting could take up to two hours.)

- Welcomes and a time of prayer.
- The minister reflects on the topic agreed.
- Sharing the feedback received and reflecting on its content (led by the lay contributor).
- Sharing thinking on the impact the minister is having on that aspect of the work (led by the ordained contributor).
- Consideration of how the insight gained will affect the work and life of the minister.
- Discussion of any new skills or approaches that would be helpful or are necessary.
- Asking what, if anything, the circuit/district needs to do as a consequence of MDR to support the work of the minister.
- Next steps for development, work to take into supervision or similar actions.

Finishing well

At the end of the meeting, two forms are completed as a record:

- A report from the MDR Team to the supervisor. This allows conversation to continue, where appropriate, and it may give rise to areas for ongoing reflection. ([The Report to the Supervisor form.](#))
- Areas for ongoing action, learning and development. This allows specific areas of action to be identified and for support to be sourced from the Learning Network, as appropriate. ([The Actions and Outcomes form.](#))

Documents are kept by all three parties until the MDR relationship comes to an end. If matters are reported into supervision, a record of this will be kept permanently. Again, we would expect the meeting to end in a time of prayer.

Extra support

There is an optional model for districts and circuits to consider that includes a potential role for an MDR administrative officer. Where such an officer is appointed, aspects of their role might include:

- Maintaining a list of the ministers involved.
- Triggering the process.
- Organising timings of meetings.
- Keeping all parties informed and reminding them of what needs to be done.
- Distributing guidance notes, etc.
- Taking a role in coordinating the receipt of feedback (although, depending on how the circuit/district chooses to organise this aspect of MDR, it may be more appropriate for the lay contributor to take this role).
- Registering the fact that the review meeting has taken place.

In summary...

Words in the ordination service remind us that: "...ministry will make great demands upon you and upon those close to you; yet in all this, the Holy Spirit will sustain you by his grace."

MDR is a sacred space, where ministry in context can be reflected upon; where the work of the Spirit can be particularly attended to; and where the demands of ministry can be held safely, considered carefully and, in some cases, alleviated by specific actions.

Training and support around the changes to the MDR process can be sourced through your Learning Network Regional Teams, and more information can be seen at www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/ministerial-development-review/

Appendix 1

Role outlines and preferred skill sets

Lay Contributor Role Profile

Role

The lay contributor will be chosen by the minister engaged in their own review. They will need to be embedded in the local context and have the skills to guide and encourage reflection on the feedback received by the minister from the people they seek to serve. Typically, they will convene the associated meetings and prompt the different stages and elements of the process that are outlined in the guide.

Skills and abilities required to fulfil the role

The lay contributor will show:

- strong administrative and communication skills
- a willingness to build rapport quickly and carefully
- attention to the lay voice within church life
- the ability to respond with empathy and tact
- a thought-through approach to reviewing and collating the feedback and subsequently giving and receiving feedback
- an understanding of engaging in constructive dialogue
- the ability to listen, both to what is said and what is left unsaid, and ask questions as they arise
- the capacity to summarise and analyse potentially complex hopes, goals and needs
- discretion and an ability to observe confidentiality
- a propensity towards a collaborative approach.

Ordained Contributor Role Profile

Role

The ordained contributor will usually be the minister in oversight. For example, unless agreed otherwise, in the case of a local circuit minister that would be the superintendent or, in the case of a superintendent, the district chair. There may be some exceptions, for example in large circuits/districts where it is not practical to expect the superintendent/chair to be involved in MDR for every minister, or where there are circumstances that might limit the work of MDR. Whoever it is, the ordained contributor must have an understanding of the relevant ministry context and be able to engage with the particular experience of ministry within that context.

The role of the ordained contributor includes the following:

- To review the feedback in good time before the meeting.
- To take soundings from colleagues and ensure their views are included in the feedback.
- To offer oversight and ensure that ministry is happening in line with the covenant agreed by the Conference in 2022.

Skills and abilities required to fulfil the role

The ordained contributor will show:

- a clear understanding of the context in which the minister undertaking MDR operates
- knowledge of the wider interface between local ministry and the Connexional agenda
- a knowledge of the Ministerial Covenant and Competencies for Ministry
- a willingness to build rapport quickly and carefully
- a thought-through approach to reviewing the feedback and subsequently giving and receiving feedback
- the ability to respond with empathy and tact
- an understanding of engaging in constructive dialogue
- the ability to listen, both to what is said and what is left unsaid, and ask questions as they arise
- the capacity to summarise and analyse potentially complex hopes, goals and needs
- discretion and an ability to observe confidentiality
- a propensity towards a collaborative approach
- a willingness to name matters of discipline and practice where they need attending to.

Appendix 2

Useful forms and templates

Ministerial Development Review

Request for feedback

As part of their ministry, your minister is being asked to reflect on a particular aspect of their work. This is part of an annual process. To support this, you are being asked to offer insights about your experience of your minister in action.

The following are important principles for you to consider when providing feedback:

- Be specific, providing examples wherever possible.
- Avoid vague, ambiguous statements.
- Be as objective as possible.
- Focus on the person's actions rather than the person.
- Avoid labels, criticism or judgements.
- Provide encouragement.
- Be succinct.

The area of focus for this year's review is

Give examples where your minister has excelled in this particular area of their ministry.

Which of your minister's gifts and skills are particularly valued by you? Be specific. How do you know this? What have you experienced that can be offered as examples?

In relation to the area of focus, please offer your thoughts about where changes might be needed or improvement made? Be specific. What would you want to see?

What words of encouragement can you offer to your minister based on your personal experience of them?

Thank you for taking time to complete this form.

Please continue to hold your minister in prayer as they are accompanied in their reflections and ongoing work.

Ministerial Development Review

Areas for reflection

This form is not mandatory. However, it may be useful for the minister to complete it in advance of an MDR meeting, to help keep focus on the chosen MDR topic and to look at it from a range of perspectives.

Consider your contribution in relation to the chosen area of focus.

Name the focus area here and consider again why it was chosen.

What was a peak experience or high point in this aspect of your ministry?

What is it that you most value about this element of your ministry?

In what way are you fulfilling your sense of calling when engaged with this facet of your work?

When did you experience a difficult situation in relation to this part of ministry?
Especially, how does it work or not work in your particular ministry context?

What gifts and graces are you using and, when you think about it,
which are lying fallow?

How have you been able to learn from failure, as well as success?

What might you want to have happen now that will enhance or improve your
practice in situ?

Consider issues to do with systems, structures and the organisation of work, use
of time etc, that have helped or hindered you. Are these within your control?
Who or what might be able to help? How might you proceed?

What areas for learning and development seem to emerge from these reflections?

If you would find it helpful, take this form along to the meeting to help with your conversations on the day. There is no requirement to do so.

Ministerial Development Review

Report to the Supervisor

Formal supervision is understood by the Methodist Church to make an important contribution to the way in which authorised ministries are overseen and held accountable. If you are involved in the MDR of a minister, you should have received a report from that minister's supervisor (as required by the Supervision Policy).

The purpose of the feedback in this form is to inform the supervisor of the focus and the outcomes of the MDR process, and to refer back to supervision any issues that need to be pursued or monitored in that relationship during the coming year.

1. Names

Minister being reviewed

Ordained contributor

Lay contributor

2. Report of the MDR process

a. Please summarise here, for the benefit of the supervisor, the hopes and goals discussed during the MDR, and any areas identified for learning and development.

b. Please inform the supervisor of any resources being made available to support the minister's development, eg training opportunities, support mechanisms, etc. Please also indicate any changes in responsibilities or priorities resulting from the MDR.

3. Referral to supervision

Bearing in mind the purposes of supervision, as set out in the Supervision Policy, is there any particular work that the MDR Team recommends should be monitored or attended to in supervision during the coming year?

- **Normative** (*such as the relationship between vision and practice; issues arising from any Code of Conduct; the identification and management of risk; boundary issues and the handling of power*).

- **Formative** (*such as the ability to reflect; specific learning needs related to a new context or role; specific skills to be developed*).

- **Restorative** (*such as self-care; attention to vocational discernment; the impact of the work upon the minister or their family*).

Signed (MDR Team)

Ordained contributor

Lay contributor

Comments from the minister being reviewed (if needed)**Signed**

Minister

Date

This report is confidential to the minister concerned, the supervisor, the ordained contributor (minister in oversight), and the lay contributor involved in the MDR.

Please list the names of those to whom this report is being sent:

Ministerial Development Review

Actions and outcomes

Name:

Date of review meeting:

What are the main threads of conversation arising in the meeting?

What actions arising now will need to be followed up?

What are your Ministerial Development Goals for the next 12 months? *(Use the Specific Areas Identified for Learning and Development boxes, below, to suggest how these might be supported.)*

Are there changes or developments within the circuit/district/across the Connexion that would support your ministry? Do they have implications that go beyond the three participants at the review meeting? If so, agree who will raise them elsewhere and report back to the triplet?

Are there any wellbeing issues that should be noted? What action needs to be taken? What support can be put in place and by whom?

MDR: Specific Areas Identified for Learning and Development

Area for learning and development #1

Support/interventions/courses suggested

Action to be taken and by whom

Area for learning and development #2

Support/interventions/courses suggested

Action to be taken and by whom

More learning and development focus areas can be added, as necessary. Similarly, there is no need to record any, if learning and development is not an appropriate route.

To address the points raised here, it may be necessary for a participant to share parts of this report with others not present at the review meeting. It may also be helpful to refer to parts of the discussion at the review meeting. The nature and extent of such disclosure should be agreed by the three participants.

I agree that this is an accurate record

Minister

Ordained contributor

Lay contributor

It may be helpful to pass on information from this form to the Learning Network (LN) coordinator or aligned LN officer for your context. Please be aware that if you do so, some information will be retained by them to help meet your needs.

Named LN contact
to whom information
has been passed

Produced by Ministries: Vocations and Worship

Methodist Church in Britain
Methodist Church House
25 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5JR

methodist.org.uk