

New Places for New People

Starting new Christian
communities:
A practical guide

Chapter 8

How to Manage
a Pioneer

How to Manage a Pioneer

Good management and oversight of a pioneer (lay or ordained) is essential for the success of the pioneer and the project. Clarifying how this will be done, and by whom, will be an important decision for the District New Places for New People (NPNP) Team to make before the project commences.

Whatever form of management/accountability process is decided upon, feedback from Methodist and ecumenical practitioners in pioneering supports the sustained and consistent presence of a good, single line manager for the pioneer in order for the project to succeed.

For all lay employees, please consult the lay employment advisory pack:
www.methodist.org.uk/layemployment

Oversight options

See below for information on the people and groups who may feed in to the management and oversight of a pioneer and project.

Single line manager: Essential

Who: Someone who understands the work, has a passion for mission, enjoys new initiatives, and has the capacity and skills to manage and support the pioneer.

Role: To ensure the work is carried out, to support and challenge, to set goals and targets, to conduct regular meetings (at least monthly) and the annual appraisal.

Benefits to the pioneer

- Consistency.
- Simple communication.
- Focused attention.
- Builds a sustained relationship.
- Clarity of 'who to go to'.
- Allows for quick and efficient decision-making.

Coach: Essential

Who: A coach will be matched with the pioneer via the Methodist Pioneering Pathways – you don't need to recruit them.

Role: To ask great questions, listen well, and help the pioneer determine the steps they should take in order to see the dreams God has given them become a reality. Coaches should not be part of line management structures, but we recommend they communicate with those involved in line management. (They will, of course, need the pioneer's permission in order to communicate and share information with the line manager). For more information, see: www.methodist.org.uk/coaching



The sustained and consistent presence of a good, single line manager for the pioneer is essential for the project to succeed.



Supervisor: Essential for ordained pioneers

Who: All ordained Methodist ministers will have structured supervision, coordinated by the Connexional Director of Supervision. For more information, see: www.methodist.org.uk/supervision

Role: Good supervision helps the supervisee pay attention to the detail of their practice within God's justice and love and in relation to ethical and healthy ways of working. Supervisors should not be part of line management structures.

Management/Steering group: As appropriate for context

Who: People with a range of expertise including mission/financial/communication/leadership and culture change (ideally a maximum of six people).

Role: To oversee and manage the project to meet its key aims and objectives by receiving reports from the pioneering team and regularly meeting the pioneer and line manager. Responsible for decision-making on key issues and giving overall guidance.

Pros:

- Provides key guidance and support for the project.
- Enables decision-making.
- Provides a wide knowledge base and expertise to navigate challenges.
- Enables understanding and ownership of the project.
- Allows for shared tasks and development.

Cons:

- Possible internal conflict over the purpose and aims of the project.
 - Multiple meetings could result in a lack of clear purpose and difficulty in decision-making.
 - Could become steered by 'dominant'/senior voices.
 - If this group also forms the line management of the project they could struggle to communicate quickly on a day-to-day basis given the size of the group.
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Reference group/Stakeholder forum: As appropriate for context

Who: People with specific knowledge and expertise, including people who attend the project eg members of other voluntary groups, agencies and ecumenical partners.

Role: Acts as a 'think tank' to discuss the issues arising from different perspectives.

Pros:

- People with 'lived' experience are included.
- Knowledge shared from a range of different aspects of the project.
- Collaborative thinking and communication.
- Shared discussion and reflection.
- Power is disseminated by the presence of multiple voices and perspectives.
- People included from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience.

Cons:

- Careful attention will be needed to ensure diversity within these groups including people from different backgrounds/education etc.
- Multiple perspectives can disable decision-making in the absence of effective leadership and healthy approaches to diverse opinions and conflict.
- Potential for competing priorities.
- Constrained by the people available.

There may also be other local or pre-existing groups who you wish to involve in the management and oversight of the pioneer and project, such as a local circuit leadership team.

Key questions for the District NPNP Team

Having reviewed the range of oversight options (above), the District NPNP Team must decide how to oversee/manage the pioneer. The following questions may help discernment.

- **Which people and groups do we want to involve in management/oversight of the pioneer and project?**

- **What is the chain of accountability for this project?**

One example would be: the pioneer is accountable to their line manager, who is accountable to the management group, who are accountable to the District NPNP Team, which is led by the District Chair. The stakeholder forum and the pioneer's coach can feed in their reflections, but are not part of the chain of accountability.

- **How will the pioneer regularly share updates and report learnings?**

For example, the pioneer could produce a monthly report on their activities (one-to-ones, new pioneering team members, strategic formation, etc) for the management group. They might also produce a quarterly update about strategy and learnings for the District NPNP Team and wider community. How might the pioneer offer missional learnings to the greater circuit and district leadership for them to engage in their own contexts?

- **Where and how will decisions be made?**
This might be in different places and with different people, depending on the subject matter.
- **Who needs to be involved in review and evaluation?**
(see page 42 for information on review processes).
- **How will the voices of people engaging the project 'on the ground' be included in the management structure?**

Line management responsibilities

- Induct the new pioneer (see 'How to Induct a New Pioneer', page 31).
- Support, direct and challenge the pioneer to perform their best, holding them accountable for delivery of work to a high standard.
- Encourage the pioneer to respond to new challenges and opportunities, in order to meet the vision and aims of the project.
- Offer feedback on individual performance and project progress via fortnightly or monthly meetings and an annual formal appraisal. (We recommend a minimum of fortnightly one-hour meetings for the first three months and monthly one-hour meetings thereafter.)
- Ensure and enable good communications and collaborative working between all the various individuals, groups and networks involved in the project.
- Act as a 'sounding board' to the pioneer.
- Oversee HR-related functions (such as flexible working arrangements, TOIL, annual leave, sick leave, complaints and discipline processes, etc) as necessary (processes will vary by region – the District NPNP Team will need to clarify responsibilities).

A vocational one to one conversation will be offered to all applicants who are not accepted onto the pathway to support their future discernment.



Encourage the pioneer to respond to new challenges and opportunities, in order to meet the vision and aims of the project.



Further resources

If line management training is required, please contact:
Rachel McCallam, Learning Network
Coordinator for the Yorkshire
Plus region, via mccallamr@methodistchurch.org.uk