A guide to Ministerial Development Review

**Move, and actuate, and guide:**
**Divers gifts to each divide;**
**Placed according to thy will,**
**Let us all our work fulfil.**

Charles Wesley

The Methodist Church

# Book Three | The review meeting in Ministerial Development Review

Further copies of this guide can be provided by contacting:

**mdr@methodistchurch.org.uk**

**Ministerial Development Review**
**Methodist Church House**
**25 Marylebone Road**
**London NW1 5JR**

PDFs of this guide are available from:

**www.methodist.org.uk/mdr**

Sue Miller, Sheryl Anderson, Paul Taylor and Siôn Rhys Evans from the Connexional Team can be contacted about Ministerial Development Review at the above email and postal addresses, and through the Helpdesk on 020 7486 5502.

The **Methodist** Church

## About this guide

This guide is designed for ordained ministers who will be involved in Ministerial Development Review, as well as for those wishing to act as lay contributors. It may also be helpful to those providing administrative support or offering feedback. It offers an overview of Ministerial Development Review, as well as providing supporting guidance and background material which will help all participants to get the most out of the process.

**Book One** is essential reading. It provides an overview of the principles which form the backdrop to Ministerial Development Review and of the key elements of the annual review meeting.

**Books Two** and **Three** provide important supporting guidance. **Book Two** considers those aspects of ministry which may provide a focus for ongoing reflection as part of Ministerial Development Review, with specific suggestions for deacons, presbyters, superintendents and district chairs respectively. It also highlights those areas which should form the focus for the annual review meeting. **Book Three** provides practical guidance about the review meeting. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the participants and outlines the preparation required for the review meeting, including the gathering and sharing of feedback. There are some suggestions about how to conduct the review meeting, and how to identify hopes, goals and areas for learning and development. This book also offers guidance about recording the key outcomes of the review meeting, and includes report templates.

**Book Four** provides background material. It looks at some of the skills and best practice which will support Ministerial Development Review and help to enable positive experiences for all participants.

*"Gardeners tend the soil to help the harvest"*
*"Nourish us, O Christ, and feed; let us daily growth receive"*

A guide to Ministerial Development Review

**Book Three | The review meeting in Ministerial Development Review**

**Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
Perfecting the saints below,
Hear us, who thy nature share,
Who thy mystic body are.**

**Join us, in one spirit join,
Let us still receive of thine;
Still for more on thee we call,
Thou who fillest all in all!**

**Closer knit to thee, our Head;
Nourish us, O Christ, and feed;
Let us daily growth receive,
More and more in Jesus live.**

**Move, and actuate, and guide:
Divers gifts to each divide;
Placed according to thy will,
Let us all our work fulfil;**

**Sweetly may we all agree,
Touched with softest sympathy:
Kindly for each other care;
Every member feel its share.**

**Many are we now and one,
We who Jesus have put on:
There is neither bond nor free,
Male nor female, Lord, in thee!**

**Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
Rendered all distinctions void;
Names, and sects, and parties fall:
Thou, O Christ, art all in all!**

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

This hymn appears in this form as a preface to the Conference Statement *Called to Love and Praise*.

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## Roles and responsibilities

## The lay contributor's role and responsibilities

### Why?

The lay contributor can offer skills and a perspective which will enhance both the process and the outcomes for the minister. Their involvement will broaden the conversation about the minister's work, and help to make the review a developmental process by bringing facilitation skills both to the preparation for review and to the review meeting itself.

### Who?

The choice of a lay contributor, in terms of whether they are from within the circuit (or the district, in the case of Ministerial Development Review for district chairs) or from elsewhere, is to be determined locally. The benefit of identifying someone from within the circuit is that they understand the context and have more specific knowledge of the minister's work and the life of the circuit. They will thus be able to offer an informed perspective on the specific requirements and the demands faced by ministers in their appointment. How this perspective is shared, however, is fundamental and it is expected that the lay contributor will also have skills in facilitation. Indeed, in some instances, it may be that someone from outside the circuit is better able to offer facilitation skills and may be chosen because the ability to facilitate learning is deemed more important than particular knowledge.

Both the minister and the ordained contributor must agree the choice of lay contributor and wish to work alongside them. It is also important that the person has the requisite skills to undertake the role. Such skills may have been nurtured during roles they have undertaken in a secular context, as well as by relationship-building roles in a church context.

It is of vital importance to have a structured conversation with potential lay contributors to ensure that:

- they understand the requirements of the role
- they are willing to take it on for a significant period of time (ideally, for at least three rounds of ministerial review to provide some continuity and to take advantage of growing confidence)
- they have the required skills – questions around their perceptions of the role and what they feel they can bring to it would be appropriate.

**Which skills and abilities?**

- Demonstrating empathy
- Building rapport
- Probing and listening
- Diplomatic and influencing skills
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Facilitating constructive dialogue
- Some analytical ability
- Discretion and ability to observe confidentiality
- Ability to capture the key points from a discussion and record them



**The ordained contributor's role and responsibilities**

The ordained contributor's role and perspective will complement that of the lay contributor, in that they will bring a particular understanding of ordained ministry and of how circuit / district / connexional needs and priorities shape the minister's work. They, too, will bring to the review an open-mindedness and a willingness to share in a dialogue.

In large circuits, where it is not feasible to expect the superintendent to be involved in Ministerial Development Review for every minister within the circuit, it is appropriate for the superintendent to designate another senior minister essentially to deputise for the superintendent at some review meetings. Similarly, it may not be practicable for a district chair to be involved in Ministerial Development Review for all the superintendents within their district, nor for the General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference to be involved in Ministerial Development Review for all district chairs. The most suitable replacement in these cases is an ordained minister who routinely substitutes for the superintendent / district chair / General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference, ie someone who can bring up to date knowledge of the circuit's / district's / Connexion's mission and priorities and a current understanding of the pressures and issues facing ministers in the area.

## The minister's role and responsibilities

Ministerial Development Review is about affirming and encouraging those who are called to ordained ministry, helping growth and development both within present appointments and as part of a Methodist discipleship movement shaped for mission. The benefits for each minister will be enhanced when the following are brought to the Ministerial Development Review process:

- The insights gathered from ongoing reflection on their own practice
- Prayerful consideration of the feedback offered by others
- Readiness to enter into a dialogue about their ministry



## Coordinating and chairing roles

The first step in arranging the review meeting is likely to be made by the ordained contributor. They will want to contact the ministers to whose meetings they will be contributing to outline a suggested time window for the review meeting and to identify and agree a lay contributor. If the superintendent / district chair / General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference is intending to ask a substitute to take their place, this is also a topic for this early conversation. However, other coordinating tasks need not fall upon the ordained contributor.

A preparatory meeting or conversation between all three participants is likely to be an efficient use of time. It will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide among themselves which of them should take the lead in coordinating any such preparatory meeting.

For more information, see **Book Three | Before the review meeting**

In advance of the review meeting, agreement needs to be reached about areas for feedback from third parties, the means for acquiring and disseminating feedback to the minister, and the structure of the review meeting. This will ideally be achieved via a preparatory meeting or discussion involving the minister, the ordained contributor and the lay contributor. Whether a meeting is convened or not, it will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide among themselves which of them should take the lead in coordinating these preparatory activities. Another preparatory activity is the gathering and sharing of feedback from third parties. Again, it will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide among themselves which of them should take the lead in gathering and sharing feedback.

For more information, see **Book Three | In more detail... | Gathering and sharing feedback**

During the review meeting itself, it will be necessary for one of the contributors to take the role of the 'chair', reflecting back, probing, etc, and ensuring that the meeting covers all the required areas in an appropriate sequence. Again, it will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide amongst themselves which of them should take the role of the chair.

For more information, see **Book Three | At the review meeting**



**A potential role for an administrative officer**

A circuit or a district may wish to appoint a Ministerial Development Review administrative officer. Where such an officer is appointed, aspects of their role may include:

- maintaining a list of the ministers involved
- triggering the process
- organising timing 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 this is an area where it may be more appropriate for the ordained contributor or lay contributor to take a lead role – it will be dependent on how the circuit / district chooses to organise this aspect of Ministerial Development Review)
- registering the fact that the review meeting has taken place.

## Before the review meeting

### First steps

As discussed above, the first step in arranging the review meeting is likely to be made by the ordained contributor. They will want to contact the ministers to whose meetings they will be contributing to outline a suggested time window for the review meeting and to identify and agree a lay contributor. If the superintendent / district chair / General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference is intending to ask a substitute to take their place, this is also a topic for this early conversation.

### Preparatory meeting

Key to a worthwhile review meeting is preparation by all participants. A preparatory meeting or conversation between all three participants is likely to be an efficient use of time. It will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide among themselves which of them should take the lead in convening any preparatory meeting.

An important preparatory task is that of gathering feedback. The nature of the feedback which may be gathered and the ways in which this might happen are outlined elsewhere, and the primary focus of a preparatory meeting or conversation between the three participants is likely to be on the gathering of feedback.

For more information, see **Book Three | In more detail… | Gathering and sharing feedback**

A preparatory meeting or conversation will also touch on logistical arrangements for the review meeting itself, the circulation of documents in advance of the meeting, and any particular focus for theological reflection at or in advance of the meeting. These areas are covered in more detail immediately below.

This meeting is also an opportunity for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to be clear about which of them will be undertaking the various coordinating and chairing roles during the remainder of the process.

For more information, see **Book Three | Roles and responsibilities**

As well as assisting in confirming a range of details, a preparatory meeting or conversation is also a useful marker to encourage all parties to organise their reflections and begin their preparations for the subsequent review meeting. It is important during the Ministerial Development Review process to ensure that communication is clear and that expectations are discussed and shared. A preparatory meeting or conversation might therefore identify what specific information or reflections the participants could usefully bring to the meeting, and whether there are any issues which deserve special emphasis. There should be an opportunity for the minister to raise anything on which they particularly wish to focus.

The timing of this preparatory meeting or conversation will vary according to what is feasible and preferred for those involved, but an early meeting (even as much as a couple of months in advance) can serve not only as an opportunity to confirm details but also to highlight the need for, and value of, a considered approach to the process as a whole.

Such meetings can be difficult to arrange, given the competing pressures on the time of those involved. Email or telephone conversations may be a substitute for a face-to-face meeting, but the value of a preparatory meeting is not to be under-estimated.

### Feedback

An important preparatory task is that of gathering feedback.

For more information, see **Book Three | In more detail… | Gathering and sharing feedback**

### Logistical arrangements

It is important to agree the time and place of the subsequent review meeting at an early stage. It is necessary to ensure that:

- the review meeting will be undisturbed
- there is sufficient time to do the meeting justice – make space for a meeting of up two hours.

### Documents

Any particular documents to which reference is likely to be made at the review meeting itself should be circulated in advance to all participants. As well as documents relating to feedback, this will include the written agreed reports about hopes and goals and about areas for learning and development which emerged from the previous year's review meeting. For the first meeting in a new appointment, it may be appropriate to circulate the circuit or district profile and the letter of understanding.

### Theological reflection

This guide is accompanied by scriptural extracts and other passages for reflection. It would be good for all the participants to reflect on these words as they prepare for the review meeting, as a reminder of the responsibilities, values and attitudes which need to be kept at the forefront throughout.

Selecting another apt scriptural passage, hymn, text or image to accompany the review process (ideally, chosen according to the needs and circumstances of each individual minister) may also provide a focus for reflection and a source of encouragement.

## In more detail… | Gathering and sharing feedback

The Ministerial Development Review scheme's over-riding purpose is the affirmation, support and development of the minister in their work. This can only be achieved by acknowledging prior achievements and challenges, and building on this experience. Reflection of this sort will always benefit from the perceptions and observations of others.

The gathering of such feedback during the Ministerial Development Review scheme requires consideration of three questions:

- What information is to be sought?
- Who is best-placed to provide it?
- How can it best be gathered and shared?

**What?**

Book Two has highlighted the aspects of ministry which should provide the topics for Ministerial Development Review, and thus for the gathering of feedback. There may be some specific issues which deserve special emphasis. It may be helpful to focus on one particular aspect of ministry in seeking feedback, rather than looking at the totality of the role each year. It will be helpful if the questions mirror any specific issues which the participants have identified for their own reflections. Whatever areas are to be explored, there needs to be agreement, and all three participants need to discuss and accept what information is to be sought and how.

For more information, see **Book Two | The focus for reflection** and **The focus for the review meeting**

Following agreement regarding the areas for feedback, an agreed set of questions needs to be drawn up. There are some suggestions below but, again, these questions should be the subject of discussion and agreement. It is important that the questions invite examples, and avoid leading to answers which comment on the minister's personality traits and irrelevant characteristics. Questions should be chosen according to the knowledge and involvement of those who are being asked for feedback: not all will be suitable for every individual.

**Who?**

Again, there should be mutual agreement in relation to who is to be asked to provide feedback for reflection and use in the review meeting. The normal starting point will be a list of potential contributors drawn up by the minister. There is no prescription regarding these contributors and their contributions. Some will choose the church or circuit stewards but there will be many others also who can provide helpful insights. In the case of deacons, fellow deacons may be a source of feedback in relation to questions around their contribution to the Order.

In all cases, there will be a number of sources of feedback – ideally a mix of lay and ordained people who have worked with the minister or experienced their ministry from a range of different perspectives. What is most important is that those who are asked to provide feedback are those who are best able to provide informed responses by citing examples and being specific about actions and outcomes. The result will be a series of observations and reflections which are necessarily subjective, because they are about what others have perceived, but which have credence because they are given by those who have experienced the minister's ministry.

If a particular aspect or theme is being explored, this may mean that those who are asked to provide feedback year by year will vary according to their relationship to the aspect or theme. Such a circulation of respondents will also avoid over-burdening certain individuals, who may find it difficult to find something new to say if approached too regularly.

**How is it gathered?**

It will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide among themselves which of them should take the lead in gathering and sharing feedback.

If written feedback is being sought, questions could be sent electronically or in hard copy, depending on the preference of those involved. Likewise the responses could be submitted in either format. It is important, however, that attention is paid to confidentiality. Care should be taken in protecting the information contained in any written communications and all involved should be alert to issues of access.

It may be decided to gather feedback through one-to-one conversations between the ordained or lay contributor and those invited to provide feedback. It will be important to be aware that such conversations may stray towards impressions, anecdote and the content may be difficult to convey to others. Having said this, if properly managed, a one-to-one conversation will allow the ordained or lay contributor to probe and to explore the real meaning of any comments or observations. The option for a one-to-one conversation also ensures that any who might not be comfortable in submitting written feedback are able to contribute.

It is important to explain to all who provide feedback why they have been asked to provide it and how their feedback will be shared with the minister. Those providing feedback should also be encouraged to observe the principles of constructive feedback:

**Avoid vague, ambiguous statements.**

**Be specific and provide examples as far as is possible.**

**Be as objective as possible.**

**Avoid labels, criticism and judgements of the person.**

**Focus on the person's actions rather than the person.**

**Provide encouragement.**

All copies of written feedback and notes of oral feedback – both electronic and hard copies – should be destroyed once the review meeting has taken place.

**See also the Template starting on page 21**

**How is it shared?**

It is helpful to share the feedback in advance of the review meeting to give participants time to absorb and reflect on its contents.

Consideration should be given to whether the gathered feedback should be shared with all parties in its raw form, or whether the ordained or lay contributor who gathered the feedback should combine the individual pieces of feedback into a single report, having extracted the key themes and weighed up the usefulness and veracity of the various comments. There is great merit in the production of such feedback reports – thoughtful summaries of the feedback received from various sources, which have teased out the salient points and expressed them in a constructive and helpful manner.

It may be, however, that the participants decide that there should be no attempt to summarise or interpret, with all participants reading the feedback in its raw form. If it is decided that the feedback should be shared with the minister in this way, there is a need also to decide whether or not the feedback should be made non-attributable. Such decisions potentially have implications for the relationship between the recipient and the giver of feedback which need to be considered.

As already noted, those providing feedback should be told how their feedback will be shared with the minister.

It is important to note that there may be times when difficult issues are expressed in the gathered feedback. The manner and the context in which this feedback is, in turn, fed back to the minister are of vital importance if the comments and observations are to have constructive impact. Discretion and good judgement are required here on the part of the ordained and lay contributors. It may be that some of this feedback is not circulated in advance but shared with care during discussion at the meeting. Where difficult issues are raised by the feedback, the ordained and lay contributors should consider in advance of the review meeting whether there are particular strategies which could enable the minister to move forward and begin to address the issues raised. It is important to try to avoid making the minister feel overwhelmed and undermined. A joint problem-solving approach, in which the participants work together during the review meeting to find a constructive way forward, will be beneficial.

**For more information, see Book Four | Giving and receiving feedback**

All copies of written feedback, notes of oral feedback and feedback reports – both electronic and hard copies – should be destroyed once the review meeting has taken place.

**Template**

Questions and topics for those providing feedback

A Word version of this template is available from:

**www.methodist.org.uk/mdr**

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

- Avoid vague, ambiguous statements.
- Be specific and provide examples as far as is possible.
- Be as objective as possible.
- Avoid labels, criticism and judgements of the person.
- Focus on the person's actions rather than the person.
- Provide encouragement.

4 It is likely that some of the suggested areas will not be relevant to every minster and ministry.

Provide positive examples of how the minister has exercised their role, considering some of all of the following areas[4] of ministry:

- Prayer and worship
- Teaching, preaching and education
- Pastoral care and spiritual guidance
- Community engagement
- Evangelism
- Leadership, vision and oversight
- Organisation, including management and administrative functions

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Are there needs which they have been unable to meet? Be specific. How do you know this?

Where has the minister made particularly noteworthy contributions? Explain why and how.

Which of the minister’s gifts and skills are particularly valued? Be specific. How do you know this?

## At the review meeting

### Purposes of the review meeting

Whilst the review meeting represents a formal point of reflection, punctuating the various developmental activities and processes which have happened throughout the year, it is also only a point in an ongoing journey of reflective practice. It draws on the feedback which has been collected from various people who have knowledge of the minister's work, on the perceptions and reflections of the ordained and lay contributors, and on the minister's own reflections about their experiences over the past year.

When carried out in the right spirit and using an appropriate approach and skills, the review meeting will provide affirmation, and a source of confidence and reassurance for the minister, as well as a sense of hope, direction and possibility. A well-conducted meeting will be a very positive experience for all the participants, and will create new ideas, perspectives and understandings and an increased potential for action.

**Achieving a positive outcome**

In order to achieve a positive outcome, the following values and beliefs need to be adhered to by all participants:

- A sense that the meeting has importance and value
- An atmosphere of trust and openness
- A sense that all are being listened to
- A concerted effort to create shared meanings and understandings
- A commitment to making any necessary changes happen
- An unthreatening and supportive approach

Whilst the meeting is about communicating knowledge and ideas and exchanging views and information, it is also about an opportunity to express emotions and feelings – and it is important that the minister is given permission to do this. 'Listening well' by the ordained and lay contributors is the key to success, since the meeting is for the minister, to give them the permission and opportunity to focus on their work, (including feelings about it, joys and triumphs, perceptions and concerns, and challenges and difficulties).

It is hoped, too, that the meeting will be more than simply an exchange of information and perceptions, and, instead, an opportunity for dialogue – for a meeting of minds. Exploring issues together in a spirit of appreciative inquiry will be helpful. This means using probing conversation to explore what has been working well in the life of the minister, to uncover learning from these positive experiences, and to establish ways in which that learning can be applied elsewhere in their ministry and in the wider church.

The other participants should be willing to take on board their roles in helping the minister to uncover the sources of any frustrations or problems and to find ways forward. Ultimately, the ordained contributor or the lay contributor, as appropriate, may need to take responsibility for raising a particular problem in another forum (and with the minister's permission), particularly where there are obstacles to their ministry which are outside the minister's control.

**Facilitating the meeting**

It will be necessary for the ordained contributor and the lay contributor to decide among themselves which of them should take the role of the 'chair'.

The chairing role in the review meeting is much like that in any other meeting – in that it is important that the chair facilitates discussion (and handles any strong feelings which threaten to derail the conversation), whilst ensuring that the required areas are covered. In the case of the review meeting, however, as in interviewing situations, most of the time should be consumed by the minister talking, with the other two parties interjecting largely to prompt discussion and to check for understanding. Again, the approach and skills adopted throughout are the most fundamental determinants of an affirming, useful and positive review meeting. Active listening and thoughtful questioning, probing, reflecting back and summarising are central to the process.

**For more information, see Book Four | Handling relationships**

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is fundamental in Ministerial Development Review. Information that is shared and the discussions which take place within the context of the process must not be divulged to others except with the prior agreement of each of the three participants.

**Note-taking and report-writing**

It is important that the meeting's key outcomes – hopes and goals, areas for learning and development, and points for action regarding the wider context – are recorded so that they can be followed up subsequently. It is also important that any other notes of the conversation are destroyed following the meeting.

For more information, see **Book Three | In more detail… | Writing post-meeting reports**

**Structuring the review meeting**

Book Two highlighted the aspects of ministry which should provide the topics for Ministerial Development Review, and thus for the review meeting itself. In particular, attention should be paid to what is said in Book Two in the section on The focus for the review meeting.

For more information, see **Book Two | The focus for reflection** and **The focus for the review meeting**

The review meeting will provide an opportunity to draw together a range of general and specific reflections by focusing on three areas:

- Reviewing the minister's work over the past year, in the context of their current appointment, and against the hopes and goals identified at the previous meeting
- The identification of new hopes and goals for the coming year in the context of circuit / district / connexional priorities
- The identification of areas for learning and development to support the minister during the coming year

Whilst the manner in which different areas are covered is more fundamental than the order in which they are introduced, it may be helpful to sequence the meeting as follows:

- Opening prayer
- Identification of the values and beliefs which will achieve a positive meeting and positive outcomes
- Establishment of the importance of confidentiality
- Establishment of a procedure for note-taking and report-writing
- An invitation to the minister to talk about the high points of the previous year
- A consideration of the feedback received from others – the minister to reflect on their reactions and perceptions and their reflections on this feedback – the minister should be given an opportunity to give their perspective on the situations described
- The ordained and lay contributors to offer their own observations in conversation with the minister. The approach should be one in which there are regular questions and invitations to the minister to offer their point of view – ie a dialogue, in which the focus is on drawing out learning or useful pointers for the future.
- An affirmation the minister's commitment and dedication – and its impact – and a celebration of the past year's joys
- An opportunity for the minister to raise difficulties, concerns and challenges and to highlight what they perceive as obstacles to their ministry. The atmosphere should be such that the minister feels able to express frustration or disappointment. The ultimate objective is that, together, the participants should begin to find ways of overcoming some of the difficulties through creative problem-solving. This may mean new ways of working by the ordained contributor, or it may mean finding others who can help with particular aspects of the work. This may mean accepting, too, that some aspects of the minister's work may now be undertaken in a different way or done by others, or not done at all.

- A consideration of the minister's particular gifts and graces, in conjunction with a discussion about their vision and aspirations for their future ministry

- A discussion about the Church's priorities and of the circuit's particular mission should help to inform some suggested hopes and goals for the minister

- A charting of some of the areas for learning and development which arise from a consideration of hopes, goals, gifts and graces

- Confirmation of a procedure for note-taking and report-writing; drafting reports, if desired

- Reaffirmation of the importance of confidentiality; confirmation regarding the destruction of notes, including notes regarding feedback

- Closing prayer



**In more detail… | Identifying hopes and goals**

One of the expected outcomes of the review meeting is the identification of hopes and goals for the coming year. This gets to the heart of one of the purposes of Ministerial Development Review: articulating and examining each minister's theologically informed sense of direction, and harnessing it, so that it both feeds into, and is fed by, the mission of the circuit, the district and the Connexion. In other words, the process of Ministerial Development Review is a means of exploring and reinforcing a sense of purpose, and uncovering vision – both for the individual minister and for the Church as a whole. It is also about discussing how to express that vision and how it can be achieved, according to God's will.

A series of questions captures the process which a minister might go through in prayerfully articulating their hopes goals and in thinking about how to achieve them. The following could be used as a framework for discussion in the review meeting:[5]

- What is the vision for the Methodist Church? What is the vision for the circuit / district in which I exercise my ministry? What do I personally long for – for the churches / circuit / district which I serve? For the Methodist Church? **A vision**

- What is my place in realising that vision? What have I discerned about my calling? What gifts and graces do I have which enable me to fulfil that desire? How can I work collaboratively with others to realise that vision? **A mission**

- What do I hope to achieve? What difference do I seek to make? **A hope or goal**

- When will I achieve it? What specific things contribute to realising that hope or achieving that goal? **Objectives**

5 Mark Wakelin in *The Making of Ministry*, ed Angela Shier-Jones, Peterborough, Epworth, 2008

- How will I achieve these things? Who will be involved? What resources will be needed? **A strategy**
- How will all this be put into practice? **An action plan**
- How will I know if I realise the hope or achieve the goal? **Monitoring and evaluation**
- How will I express my delight when the vision is realised? **Celebration**



**In more detail… | Identifying areas for learning and development**

Ministerial Development Review is in itself a learning process, and it is hoped that it will encourage ongoing 'reflection on action' as an integral part of the practice of ministry. Ministerial Development Review, however, is also designed to help the minister consider how far their ministry and their experience might be enhanced through learning opportunities.

Throughout the process of Ministerial Development Review the minister will be highlighting any requirements for help or support which arise from the issues or opportunities which emerge. This will culminate in the review meeting in which there will be further insights into the minister's learning needs and their aspirations for their further development. One of the outcomes of the process, then, will be a set of learning needs for the minister concerned, or the requirement for other means of support. These should be recorded and followed up accordingly.

**Responding to identified areas**

While structured, formal opportunities for learning and development might sometimes be the best way of meeting particular learning needs, there are other ways of supporting learning which may not involve a course or programme. These alternative interventions may be particularly effective in releasing gifts or building relationships.

Leading a project, or taking part in a collaborative arrangement in which the minister learns from others with different roles or different perspectives, are all possible means both of developing the minister and of enhancing the work of the Church.

Action learning – an approach to learning in which individuals work together in groups (or 'sets') on real problems encountered in work and on the actions which can be taken to help resolve them – is already being used in some contexts within the Methodist Church (where they are sometimes known as 'reflective learning sets').

Similarly, there are those who use a work consultancy model, whereby the minister joins with someone who has particular skills in helping them to analyse and reflect on their ministerial work and find creative ways of meeting the challenges which they face. It has great potential both to develop ministers and to impact positively on the contexts in which they work.

Any formal partnership or grouping which supports ministers and helps them to reflect on aspects of their ministry is to be encouraged.

Sabbaticals continue to provide opportunities for growth and development: for ministers who are due for a sabbatical, the Ministerial Development Review meeting could provide an opportunity for a discussion about how this time might meet best be spent in order to meet the particular needs which the minister has identified.

### Future work on continuing ministerial learning

Further work at a connexional level is being undertaken on the Church's continuing ministerial learning provision. As this work develops, it will be important to trace patterns of need across the Connexion, to capture good practice and to enable responsive provision. The Fruitful Field project, which will be reporting to the 2012 Conference, will seek to address needs and longings in this area.



### In more detail… | Writing post-meeting reports

See also the **Report templates** starting on page 45

The purpose of post-meeting reports is not to record all the details of the conversation which took place at the review meeting but rather the outcomes of the meeting, particularly those which require follow-up and action. Thus the review of the past year and the discussion of successes and challenges are not to be written up as a formal report, unless the minister specifically requests that they should be.

Reports may be prepared to cover three areas:

- Hopes and goals for the coming year
- Areas for learning and development
- Points for action regarding the wider context

Whilst the reports could be drafted after the meeting, there are significant benefits to drafting reports during the meeting itself, after the substantive discussions have taken place. If the reports are drafted during the meeting, it is more likely that that key points of the meeting will be captured. This will also avoid the risk of delays in drafting the reports, as memories fade and as other commitments take priority. It will also avoid the risk of contested recollections and misunderstandings about outcomes. Where reports are drafted by one participant after the meeting has ended, they should be circulated to other participants for agreement.

### Content

Guidance about hopes, goals and areas for learning and development are included elsewhere.

For more information, see **Book Three | In more detail… | Identifying hopes and goals** and **Identifying areas for learning and development**

Points for action regarding the wider context are likely to result from suggestions which have emerged in the meeting which need to be followed up or referred elsewhere. It is likely that such points will relate to systems, structures or resources, or to areas of the life of the Church which may benefit from gifts and graces which have been identified or emphasised during the meeting. Where there are wider implications or where input is needed from others, it may be necessary to share some parts of the report and to refer to the discussion at the review meeting. The nature and extent of disclosure needs to be agreed by the participants.

**The use of recorded information**

Much of what emerges from the Ministerial Development Review process is for ownership by the minister and is not available to others outside the process. The main outcomes will always be an improved understanding of ministry and enhanced reflection on practice.

The agreed written reports are for strictly limited circulation, and any further circulation or wider use should only be undertaken at the absolute discretion of the minister concerned.

Retention of reports should normally follow the patterns below:

- A copy of the agreed written reports about hopes and goals, areas for learning and development and points of action regarding the wider context should be kept by the minister and the ordained contributor only.

- Where the ordained contributor is substituting for a colleague, the ordained contributor's copy should normally be sent to and kept by the superintendent / the district chair / the General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference (as appropriate to the minister concerned). This information will enable the superintendent / the district chair / the General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference (as appropriate to the minister concerned) to understand better the gifts, graces and developmental needs of the minister, so as to support the ways in which such needs are met, and so as to shape circuit, district and connexional activities to tap into gifts and to enable growth and development.

- The agreed written reports about hopes and goals and about areas for learning and development will be used during the following year's review meeting, unless the minister concerned has begun a new appointment.

- The agreed written reports kept by the superintendent / the district chair / the General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference (as appropriate to the minister concerned) should be destroyed when the minister's current appointment comes to an end. A minister may keep their own copies of the reports for as long as they see fit.

Wider circulation of the agreed written reports or of information discussed during the meeting should normally follow only the patterns set out below:

- As noted above, it is likely that the report on points for action regarding the wider context will have implications which go beyond the three participants. Consequently, it may be necessary to share some parts of the report with a wider audience and to refer to the discussion at the review meeting in order to address the points which have been raised. The nature and extent of disclosure needs to be agreed by the participants.

- Information about areas for learning and development may be helpful for district and connexional officers as they seek to develop the Church's continuing ministerial learning provision to meet such needs. Ministers may wish to make available a note of their areas for learning and development in response to requests for information from district and connexional officers.

- Information discussed during Ministerial Development Review should not routinely be used by the stationing process. Some ministers may, however, feel that one or more of the agreed written reports could be helpful to the circuit invitation committee if an extension is being considered, or to the district chair when the minister's profile is being drafted in preparation for matching to a new appointment. In such circumstances, one or more of the reports could be made available to the committee or to the district chair by the minister concerned, and such circulation should only be initiated by the minister.

It is necessary to track how far action has been taken in response to the minister's requests and requirements, particularly where it has been agreed to refer matters elsewhere. A six-monthly review, where the superintendent / the district chair / the General Secretary & Secretary of the Conference (as appropriate to the ministers concerned) sifts through reports and checks that required action has been taken, would be beneficial.

**Report template**

Hopes and goals

A Word version of this template is available from:

**www.methodist.org.uk/mdr**

Date of review meeting

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Record up to three hopes or goals which you have identified as a result of reflecting on your ministry and which have grown out of the review meeting's discussion about your ministry and circuit / district / connexional priorities.

Do not feel obliged to set as many as three hopes and goals.

In each case, be specific about the support which you will need to enable you to realise your hope or achieve your goal, and suggest how you will know if you have realised or achieved it.

Some of your hopes and goals might be to focus more closely on an existing area / project / priority, and to do less of something else. If so, draw out the implications on the form below in terms of support needed.

Hope / goal

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Support you need and who might be involved

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Anticipated milestones or indicators of achievement

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Hope / goal

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Support you need and who might be involved

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Anticipated milestones or indicators of achievement

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Hope / goal

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Support you need and who might be involved

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Anticipated milestones or indicators of achievement

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I agree that this is an accurate record:

Minister

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Ordained contributor

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Lay contributor

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**Report template**

Areas for learning and development

A Word version of this template is available from:

**www.methodist.org.uk/mdr**

Date of review meeting

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Area for learning and development

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Support / interventions / courses suggested

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Action to be taken, and by whom

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Area for learning and development

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Support / interventions / courses suggested

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Action to be taken, and by whom

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Area for learning and development

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Support / interventions / courses suggested

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Action to be taken, and by whom

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I agree that this is an accurate record:

Minister

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Ordained contributor

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Lay contributor

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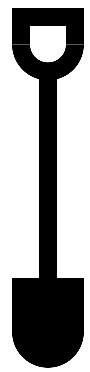

**Report template**

Points for action regarding the wider context

A Word version of this template is available from:

**www.methodist.org.uk/mdr**

Date of review meeting

Are there changes or developments within the circuit / district / Connexion which would support your ministry? Do they have implications which go beyond the three participants at the review meeting? If so, note them here.

In order to address the points raised here, it may necessary for other participants to share some 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 disclosure should be agreed by the three participants.

I agree that this is an accurate record:

Minister

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Ordained contributor

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Lay contributor

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Produced by the Discipleship & Ministries Cluster of the
Connexional Team of the Methodist Church

Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR

Helpdesk 020 7486 5502

www.methodist.org.uk

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