



## Connexional Team Guidelines for the **Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting**

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### **561 Functions**

The meeting shall:

(vi) deal with the business set out in the agenda in Part 10 in accordance with any guidelines from the Connexional Team.

### **1 Worship**

It is worth considering how worship might be related to the next agenda item. The style and content of the worship could provide an opportunity to experience on some occasions fresh approaches to worship and on other occasions the richness of Methodist tradition.

### **2 Presentation / discussion / review**

***Topics might include: worship, preaching, mission, development, creativity, contemporary relevance***

This agenda item is placed early

- to give priority to consideration of such matters;
- to encourage theological reflection by all attending;
- to foster a developmental approach;
- to enable those attending who are not local preachers to leave after this agenda item if that is what the meeting considers to be appropriate.

Possibilities here could include:

- a presentation and discussion for a student's *Faith & Worship* Unit 18 project;
- a presentation and discussion based on continuing development activities by one or more members (e.g. work already done as part of CLPD rather than additional work);
- a review of the Circuit's mission initiatives, with discussion about implications for worship and preaching;
- exploration of a contemporary issue and discussion about how the issue might be addressed in worship and/or preaching;
- reflection on an article in a worship and preaching journal or a theological publication;
- consideration of creative possibilities in worship and preaching.



### **3 Record of decisions, advice and recommendations from the previous meeting**

Circuit Local Preachers' Secretaries do not need to keep detailed minutes of meetings. In order to ensure accountability and progress, the meeting does need a record of decisions (e.g. about action points: who will do what, when and where), advice (e.g. to Church Councils on worship leader matters) and recommendations (e.g. to the Circuit Meeting about the admission of a new local preacher).

The record not only reminds everyone of key points from the previous meeting but also begs the question of what has (or should have) happened in the meantime. This item therefore covers the ground of what other meetings might have called 'Minutes' and 'Matters arising'.

### **4 Preparation for service: reports [from sub-groups] on, and arrangements for:**

- **local preachers on note**
- **local preachers on trial**
- **worship leaders: advice to Church Councils**

There is an interesting line to tread here. In order to prepare people for service, what does the full meeting need to do and what could a smaller group usefully do to save time in the meeting?

The meeting may choose to delegate most of its work on these matters to a small sub-group, perhaps more than one sub-group. Sub-groups make recommendations to the meeting, but the meeting itself has to come to a mind on what any sub-groups are saying. If a sub-group is undecided on a particular matter (for example, a theological issue), then it has to refer that matter to the meeting for full discussion.

Reports and recommendations need (usually brief, perhaps a few bullet points) supporting evidence so that the meeting is not merely a rubber stamp for the sub-group. The Service Report Form Summary Sheet is designed to elicit supporting evidence from the preacher's and the assessors' copies of the Service Report Form. That evidence could also be useful elsewhere e.g. at the Circuit Meeting or at a Church Council meeting. It also allows other members of the meeting to offer contrasting evidence to help the meeting come to a more informed view.



The meeting needs to keep track of how long each person has been on note or on trial and the stage of each worship leader in the ongoing triennial review cycle. A chart or time-line could save time in presenting this information to the meeting.

Arrangements for formal reports (e.g. who will report on which service) could be done by a sub-group before the meeting and offered for approval by the meeting.

## **5 Oversight and organisation:**

- ***accountability and review***

The Local Preachers' Meeting is responsible for oversight of all local preachers and each local preacher is accountable to the meeting. . Annual consideration of the Duties and Rights of local preachers provides an opportunity to remind the meeting of the need for accountability and review – and the fact that procedures are now in place to enable appropriate action when particular concerns arise. This will make it easier to turn to the procedures and apply them when necessary. Accountability and review procedures appear below. on separate guidelines.

- ***recruitment of new local preachers***

It is worth considering 'recruitment' at least annually. Ideas to invite others to recognise and respond to a call to preach appear on the local preachers pages of the Methodist Church website

- ***continuing development***

All local preachers should have a commitment to continuing development. . This item on the agenda seeks to encourage all to develop spiritually, to grow in knowledge and understanding and to develop in preaching and leading worship. It also invites the possibility that some local preachers might share the fruits of their activities in agenda item 2 of a subsequent meeting. If the meeting chooses, support for continuing development could be undertaken by a nominated individual.

- ***possible calling to other ministries***

It is also worth considering possible calling to other ministries at least annually. In addition to the ministries of Deacon and Presbyter, Christian discipleship may be leading local preachers to other lay ministries.

- ***pastoral care and support***

The Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary (or, if the meeting chooses, a nominated individual) has an undefined duty of pastoral care towards all local preachers in the Circuit, particularly those who are elderly, no longer able to preach, and those ill or bereaved. Letters and messages of sympathy and a personal letter sent with the annual letter, etc, are all appreciated greatly and build up the bonds of fellowship. Those on note and on trial also appreciate interest, support and encouragement.



- **LWPT: friends, local activities and fund-raising**

Pastoral care and support can also be extended to dependants and relatives of local preachers and worship leaders - especially those in need - through the work of LWPT (*leaders of worship and preachers trust*). LWPT can also offer support for training and development. Full details are available from the LWPT website [www.lwpt.org.uk](http://www.lwpt.org.uk). In order to flourish, LWPT needs local activities and fund-raising by its friends – many (but not all) of whom are members of the Local Preachers' Meeting. This agenda item invites involvement in and encouragement of local activities and fund-raising for LWPT. The LWPT journal 'Ichthus' could be a source of ideas for agenda item 2 of the Local Preachers' Meeting. If the meeting chooses, this work could be undertaken by a nominated individual.

- **administration and appointments**

Administration matters that need to be addressed annually include:

- arrangements for Local Preachers' Sunday in the Circuit;
- arrangements for co-operation with preachers of other Circuits and churches;
- return of questionnaire (pink form) to District Local Preachers' Secretary or other District officer;

Administration matters that may also arise include:

- the (green) return form to be sent to the Connexional Team or completed online when people:
  - are received on note
  - are received on trial
  - are appointed as a mentor
  - are appointed as a local tutor (new or replacement)
  - are appointed as a new Local Preachers' Secretary
  - are to be admitted as a local preacher (and therefore needing a copy of the President's letter and a signed bookplate for the Bible that the Circuit presents to the new local preacher) **1 month's notice**
  - are to be awarded a long-service certificate **1 month's notice**. Certificates should be requested for the following years of service: 25, 40, 50, 60, 70.
  - *also* when a local preacher in the Circuit has died.
- consultations on worship or similar meetings held in the Circuit and the participation of local preachers in them;
- arrangements for payment of expenses to local preachers;
- arrangements for an appraisal/assessment scheme for preachers in the Circuit.



Appointments that are decided annually:

- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary (if required)
- Treasurer (if required)
- Local Tutor(s)
- Other appointments as required

## **6**      ***Church, Circuit and other news***

Primarily, this agenda item seeks to keep a lively awareness of the Circuit and the wider Connexion. It is also likely to raise priorities, interests and concerns that may need consideration in future Local Preachers' Meetings. If so, these need to be recorded to encourage appropriate action.

## **7**      ***Date and place of next meeting***



## Connexional Team Guidelines for **Local Preachers: Circuit Interviews**

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### **566 Admission Procedure**

(2) The interviews shall be conducted either by the Superintendent or (at his or her request) by other preachers at the Local Preachers' Meeting. The local tutor or the person's mentor would each be appropriate people to conduct the interviews. For each interview guidelines from the Connexional Team shall be supplied by the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary to the person on trial, the Superintendent and the interviewer.

Interviewers and interviewees may wish to access the following guidelines from the local preacher pages of the Methodist Church website [www.methodist.org.uk/lp](http://www.methodist.org.uk/lp)



## Connexional Team Guidelines for **Local Preachers: Accountability**

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### **567 Accountability and Review**

(2) If a question or concern is raised about the conduct of a local preacher, or if a complaint within the meaning of Part 11 [*of CPD: Complaints and Discipline*] is made about any member of the meeting, the provisions of that Part apply.

(3) Subject to clause (2) above, if a question or concern is raised about the fidelity to doctrine of a local preacher or his or her fitness for the work (including his or her calling, commitment to fulfil his or her duties or his or her competence as a local preacher) the meeting shall follow the guidelines for such circumstances produced by the Connexional Team. The guidelines shall include guidance on the circumstances in which Part 11 applies.

### **Complaints and Discipline**

Part 11 of CPD must be the first port of call when a complaint is made about a local preacher. The Superintendent, acting as Local Complaints Officer unless that function has been delegated to another person, will need to consider whether local resolution is appropriate as part of local preacher accountability.

Part 11 spells out the grounds on which a complaint may be made (breach of discipline, words/acts/omissions which are incompatible with the office/standing of the person, any conviction/formal police caution which would be a bar to appointment).

A separate guide to the Complaints and Discipline process sets out how complaints are to be dealt with.

The procedures of Part 11 must be followed to the letter - for the sake of the complainant, the respondent, and everyone else involved. To do otherwise is to invite complication and even more distress.

The Superintendent has the power to suspend a local preacher as set out in Standing Order 013 and Standing Order 1105. Suspension is a neutral act and does not make any implication about the local preacher concerned (or, indeed, the Superintendent).



## Calling

### Standing Order 563 (1)

Preachers are called of God, to be worthy in character, to lead God's people in worship and to preach the gospel.

Where there is behaviour that indicates that a preacher may not be 'called of God', then a formal complaint may be made and will be dealt with in accordance with Part 11 of CPD.

A call to preach should rightly be reflected upon and reviewed by any preacher. A sense of call may well be confirmed by such reflection and review, but it might be questioned seriously by the person concerned and uncertainty be voiced in conversation. A weakened sense of a call might also be evident in weakened commitment to preaching.

There is a need to appreciate that it is possible a person's call to preach may not be to a lifelong ministry. Methodism has a long-standing expectation that it will be, but God may call people who are currently preachers to other forms of ministry. Sometimes a new ministry may be enhanced by preaching, but sometimes it may not. If a person's sense of call to be a local preacher is fading, there may be a need to encourage, support, even challenge, but there may also be a need to accept (without suggestion of failure) that this ministry is coming to an end.

### *Who might raise such a concern?*

It is likely that preachers, whose sense of call to preach is fading, will themselves find a way to raise this as a concern. It might occur in a pastoral meeting between a local preacher and their minister. It might be that a weakening of commitment by a local preacher gives others an opportunity to check with them whether this is part of a weakened sense of call.

### *Procedure*

In a case where a local preacher's call to preach is in question, then two members, with the authority, support and prayers of the Local Preachers' Meeting, should meet with the preacher concerned to consider the points raised above. The choice of the two members needs sensitive handling. In some circumstances, it might be helpful to consider together words from the Covenant Service (MWB pp287-290).



*Possible outcomes from this meeting:*

- No need for any action because the calling of the local preacher is not at all in doubt.
- Agreed action-points (by whom, when etc) to support and encourage the local preacher. These action-points should be put in writing with copies for the local preacher concerned, the Superintendent and the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary.
- Agreed recommendations for action to bring this ministry to a fitting conclusion. Where there is a possibility of future reinstatement, Standing Order 568 needs to be noted.
- If the concern persists after such action, then it must become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Part 11 of CPD, including the suspension of the local preacher until the complaints and discipline procedure is completed.

## **Competence**

Standing Order 563(2)

As to worship, it is the duty of local preachers:

- (i) to lead worship and preach with knowledge, conviction and competence

The *'Faith & Worship'* course and the booklet on Continuing Local Preacher Development translate 'knowledge, conviction and competence' in terms of study, spirituality and skills. However, in these guidelines, 'Competence' covers all three areas, implying that ineffectiveness in any of these areas seriously impairs the overall competence of a preacher.

### *Who might raise such a concern?*

Concerns about competence are likely to be expressed by stewards and congregation members (including other local preachers) and there may be a reluctance to register a concern formally through Church Councils. The Local Preachers' Meeting should be alert to concerns so that appropriate supportive action can be taken.

### *Procedure*

The meeting should refer a concern about competence to the Superintendent and the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary for consideration using the procedure outlined below. If the concern is about the competence (as a preacher) of the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary, then the District Local Preachers' Secretary should be involved.



The Superintendent and the Local Preachers' Secretary should clarify:

- what aspects of competence are needing to be addressed (e.g. study, spirituality, skills)
- what support systems are / could be in place,
- who would be the most appropriate people (not necessarily preachers) to raise the matter with the preacher concerned,
- if two of those people are prepared to meet with the preacher.

The two people, with the authority, support and prayers of the Local Preachers' Meeting should meet with the preacher to raise the concerns and to consider helpful ways to rebuild trust and confidence between the preacher and churches in the Circuit.

### *Possible outcomes*

- Report by the two people to the Circuit LP Meeting why no action is needed by the local preacher or worship leader (e.g. because of misunderstanding) and recommendation on how the meeting should respond to those who have expressed concern.
- Agreed action by the local preacher /worship leader to answer the concerns raised e.g. at a future meeting or in writing.
- Agreed action-points for training and support (by whom, when etc) to achieve a level of competence that meets the Circuit's needs. These action-points should be put in writing with copies for the local preacher / worship leader concerned, the Superintendent and the Circuit LWP Secretary.
- Recommendations to bring this ministry to a fitting conclusion (e.g. the resignation of the local preacher – where possible expressed in terms of retirement; some fitting way the Circuit can mark this ending and record appreciation).
- If the concern persists after such action, then it may become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Part 11 of CPD
- The Superintendent may determine that it is necessary for the local preacher or worship leader to be suspended as set out in either Standing Order 013 or Standing Order 1105.



## **Fidelity to doctrine**

Standing Order 563(2)

As to worship, it is the duty of local preachers:

- (ii) to preach nothing at variance with our doctrines (the term 'our doctrines' refers to those truths of salvation which are set forth in the Methodist doctrinal standards)

Fidelity to doctrine is an obligation of office for a local preacher. Methodist doctrinal standards' are stated in the Deed of Union Section 2(4). These are broad statements which have enabled the Methodist Church to be a broad church encompassing and embracing a variety of perspectives of faith. A complaint that a local preacher is not fulfilling the obligation of fidelity to doctrine must be dealt in accordance with Part 11 of CPD.

### *Concerns (rather than a complaint) about fidelity to doctrine*

Local preachers need to appreciate that they are serving a broad church of people who will not necessarily share a preacher's particular perspective. This sensitivity is dealt with in Unit 5 of *Faith & Worship*.

The Methodist Catechism (available from Methodist Publishing) is useful in setting out 'as clear a statement as possible of the Christian faith'. In Section 68 it also describes distinctive features of the Methodist Church, including a summary of its message as:

All need to be saved.

All may be saved.

All may know themselves to be saved.

All may be saved to the uttermost.

The inclusive nature of these statements indicates that preachers in Methodist churches need to proclaim Good News for all.

That same section also points to other traditional features of the Methodist Church, including 'the importance of hymn-singing in worship and in the teaching of doctrine'. 'Hymns & Psalms' therefore becomes a useful resource in articulating doctrines espoused by the Methodist Church, as does the Methodist Worship Book.



Where there are concerns about expressions of doctrine by local preachers, the Bible, the Deed of Union, the Catechism, 'Hymns & Psalms' and the Methodist Worship Book are the main resources available as checkpoints.

The Methodist Church expects local preachers to stay true to the doctrines it holds. When an interest in, or enthusiasm for, a particular aspect of faith becomes a preoccupation for a preacher (always banging the same drum) or for a worship leader (always using the same form of words), then the Good News is being diminished. There are similar dangers when a statement of belief is expressed persistently in a way that distorts well-established doctrines, or that provokes un-Christian attitudes (like xenophobia), or that runs counter to Methodist Church policy (e.g. on sexuality).

### *Who might raise such a concern?*

Concerns about fidelity to doctrine are likely to be expressed by Church Councils, but also by stewards and congregation members (including other local preachers – preferably before, but possibly at, a Local Preachers' Meeting). If a formal complaint is made, then it must be dealt in accordance with Part 11 of CPD. An informal concern or question about a local preacher can be dealt with using the following procedure.

### *Procedure*

The meeting should refer a concern about fidelity to doctrine to the Superintendent and the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary for consideration using the procedure outlined below. If the concern is about the doctrine of the preaching or leading of worship of the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary, then the District Local Preachers' Secretary should be involved.

The Superintendent and the Local Preachers' Secretary should clarify:

- the nature of concern about doctrine that needs to be addressed,
- what support systems are / could be in place,
- who would be the most appropriate people (not necessarily preachers) to raise the matter with the local preacher concerned,
- if two of those people are prepared to meet with the local preacher.

The two people, with the authority, support and prayers of the Local Preachers' Meeting should meet with the preacher to raise the concerns and to consider helpful ways to rebuild trust and confidence between the local preacher and the Circuit.



## *Possible outcomes*

- Report by the two people to the Local Preachers' Meeting on why no action is needed by the local preacher (e.g. because of misunderstanding) and recommendation on how the meeting should respond to those who have expressed concern.
- Agreed action by the local preacher to answer the concerns raised e.g. at a future meeting or in writing.
- Agreed action-points for training and support (by whom, when etc) to enable the local preacher to meet the doctrinal standards of the Methodist Church. These action-points should be put in writing with copies for the local preacher concerned, the Superintendent and the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary.
- Recommendations to bring this ministry to a fitting conclusion (e.g. the resignation of the local preacher – where possible expressed in terms of retirement; some fitting way the Circuit can mark this ending and record appreciation).
- If the concern persists after such action, then it may become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Part 11 of CPD.
- The Superintendent may determine that it is necessary for the local preacher or worship leader to be suspended as set out in either Standing Order 013 or Standing Order 1105.

## **Commitment**

Standing Order 563(2)

As to worship, it is the duty of local preachers:

- (iii) to be available for an appropriate number of appointments each quarter, having regard to the situation of the local preacher and of the Circuit;
- (iv) to inform the Superintendent of any occasions on which they cannot be available for appointments on the forthcoming circuit plan;
- (v) to fulfil all appointments given on the circuit plan;
- (vi) if unable to fulfil an appointment, to arrange for a suitable substitute, informing the Superintendent and a church steward of the Local Church concerned;
- (vii) to take overall responsibility for an act of worship when appointed on the circuit plan;
- (viii) to seek to work collaboratively with others in leading worship.

Each of these duties makes demands on a local preacher's time. The level of commitment is high and for some duties may be difficult to achieve with high demands on time from work and family life or



difficulties of health and age. Point (iii) recognises this, but also makes clear that the situation of the local Circuit also needs to be taken into account. There is a balancing act here which needs to be handled sensitively.

If a preacher shows a disregard for the duties of a local preacher, then a formal complaint may be made and will be dealt with in accordance with Part 11 of CPD. Where there is a concern that a preacher may not be fulfilling a particular duty, the procedure below should be followed.

### *Who might raise such a concern?*

Those who make the circuit Plan of preaching appointments, Church Councils, church stewards and members of the Local Preachers' Meeting could be in a position to express concern about the commitment of a local preacher.

### *Procedure*

In a case where the commitment of a local preacher is in question, two members of the Local Preachers' Meeting, with the authority, support and prayers of the Meeting should define areas of concern using the points raised above. They should have an initial meeting with the preacher to explain the concerns.

### *Possible outcomes from this meeting:*

- No need for any action because the local preacher has answered the concerns fully and future levels of commitment are not in question.
- Agreed action by the local preacher to answer the concerns raised e.g. at a future meeting or in writing.
- Agreed action-points (by whom, when etc) to achieve a level of commitment that meets the Circuit's needs and that can be sustained by the local preacher. These action-points should be put in writing with copies for the preacher concerned, the Superintendent and the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary.
- If the concern persists after such action, then it must become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Part 11 of CPD.
- The Superintendent may determine that it is necessary for the local preacher or worship leader to be suspended as set out in either Standing Order 013 or Standing Order 1105.



## Connexional Team Guidelines for Worship Leaders

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### **680 Initial procedures**

(1) Where the appointment of worship leaders is under consideration, the Church Council shall consult the Local Preachers' Meeting of the Circuit and follow Connexional Team guidelines as to the arrangements to be made by the Church Council in relation to:

- (i) consideration of the suitability of would-be candidates;
- (ii) the training programme prescribed, or validated in advance, by the Methodist Council to be fulfilled by candidates;
- (iii) the responsibility of the Local Preachers' Meeting for the monitoring of candidates' progress in and completion of training and probation and the assessment of their suitability for appointment;
- (iv) the responsibilities of appointed worship leaders.

In its consideration of a person interested in becoming a worship leader, a Church Council needs to refer to Standing Order 681: *Responsibilities of worship leaders*.

### **681 Responsibilities of Worship Leaders**

(1) Worship leaders are called of God, to be worthy in character and to assist in leading God's people in worship. This places responsibilities on worship leaders.

(2) As to worship, it is the responsibility of worship leaders:

- (i) to help lead worship with knowledge, conviction and competence;
- (ii) to help lead worship in accordance with our doctrines (the term 'our doctrines' refers to those truths of salvation which are set forth in the Methodist doctrinal standards);
- (iii) to be available to help lead worship at times and places agreed with the Superintendent in accordance with Standing Order 683(4).

(3) As to fellowship and training, it is the responsibility of worship leaders:

- (i) to continue to develop in knowledge, conviction and competence;
- (ii) to attend a class, house group or similar fellowship group if possible.



(4) As to membership of the Local Church, it is the responsibility of worship leaders regularly to attend public worship in their Local Church, normally a Methodist church or an approved local ecumenical partnership, and to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Is there potential for the person to become a worship leader fulfilling these responsibilities? People do not have to be worship leaders to contribute to worship, but participation (e.g. as a Bible reader, as part of a worship group, as someone who leads 'Reader Services') could alert a Church Council to the possibility that a person might become a worship leader. The Council presents to the Local Preachers' Meeting the person's name and a short statement about why the Council supports the application.

The Local Preachers' Meeting can support or decline the application. Normally, the Meeting will support the application and ensure that arrangements are in hand for providing a training programme, for monitoring candidates' progress and for assessing each candidate's suitability for appointment. If declining the application at any stage of the process, the Meeting must give clear reasons that relate to Standing Order 681.

### **683 Appointment**

(1) Reports on the training and probation of candidates shall be made to the Local Preachers' Meeting which shall inform and advise the relevant Church Councils about candidates' progress using Connexional Team guidelines.

The Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary will need to record the names of all worship leaders, (including those in training), the churches they serve and the date of their appointment. This information needs to be updated annually for the District pink forms and the Circuit profile.

Brief reports on each candidate's progress during training and probation to the Local Preachers' Meeting (or an appointed sub-group) need to be given by those providing the training and those overseeing the probationary period. The reports should be conveyed to the relevant Church Council(s). Reports should take account of Standing Order 681: *Responsibilities of worship leaders*, make use of relevant parts of the Service Report Form and offer both praise and constructive comments as appropriate. When the Local Preachers' meeting supports or declines the appointment of a worship leader, evidence needs to be drawn from reports.



## **684 Accountability**

- (1) Worship leaders shall be held accountable to the Church Council for their ministry, their character, their fidelity to doctrine and their fitness for the work by reference to the responsibilities set out in Standing Order 681.
- (2) If a question or concern is raised about the conduct of a worship leader, or if a complaint within the meaning of Part 11 is made, the provisions of that Part apply.
- (3) Subject to clause (2) above, if a question or concern is raised about the fidelity to doctrine of a worship leader or his or her fitness for the work (including his or her calling, commitment to fulfil his or her responsibilities or his or her competence as a worship leader) the Church Council shall refer the case to the Local Preachers' Meeting which shall follow the guidelines for such circumstances produced by the Connexional Team. The guidelines shall include guidance on the circumstances in which Part 11 applies.

### *Complaints and Discipline*

Part 11 of CPD must be the first port of call when a complaint is made about a worship leader. The Superintendent acting as Local Complaints Officer, unless that function has been delegated to another person, will need to consider whether a local resolution is appropriate as part of worship leader accountability.

Part 11 spells out the grounds on which a complaint may be made (breach of discipline, words/acts/omissions which are incompatible with the office/standing of the person, any conviction/formal police caution which would be a bar to appointment).

A separate guide to the Complaints and Discipline process sets out how complaints are to be dealt with.

The procedures of Part 11 must be followed to the letter - for the sake of the complainant, the respondent and everyone else involved. To do otherwise is to invite complication and even more distress.

The Superintendent has the power to suspend a worship leader under Standing Order 013 and Standing Order 1105. Suspension is a neutral act and does not make any implication about the worship leader concerned (or, indeed, the Superintendent).



## *Worthy in character*

Any concern, question or complaint about a worship leader's character-worthiness must be addressed first in accordance with Part 11 of CPD. It is unlikely to be appropriate to take independent local action.

## *Called of God*

Where there is behaviour that indicates that a worship leader may not be 'called of God', then a formal complaint may be made and will be dealt with in accordance with Part 11 of CPD.

A call to lead worship should rightly be reflected upon and reviewed by any worship leader. It should also be part of the triennial review of worship leaders. If a Church Council has a concern about a worship leader's calling, then the Council should contact the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary to arrange a review that may be 'out-of-synch' with the normal three-year cycle. If the concern persists after action (to a timeline) prompted by the review, then it must become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Section 02 of CPD, including the suspension of the worship leader until the complaints and discipline procedure is completed.

## *Competence*

Standing Order 681 expects worship leaders to help lead worship with 'knowledge, conviction and competence'. In these guidelines, 'Competence' covers all three areas (study, spirituality and skills), implying that ineffectiveness in any of these areas seriously impairs the overall competence of a worship leader. If a Church Council has a concern about a worship leader's competence, then the Council should contact the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary to arrange a review that may be 'out-of-synch' with the normal three-year cycle. If the concern persists after action (to a timeline) prompted by the review, then it must become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Part 11 of CPD, including the suspension of the worship leader until the complaints and discipline procedure is completed.

## *Fidelity to doctrine*

Fidelity to doctrine is an obligation of office for a worship leader. Methodist doctrinal standards' are stated in the Deed of Union Section 2(4). These are broad statements which have enabled the Methodist Church to be a broad church encompassing and embracing a variety of perspectives of faith. A complaint that a worship leader is not fulfilling the obligation of fidelity to doctrine must be dealt in accordance with Part 11 of CPD.



## *Concerns (rather than a complaint) about fidelity to doctrine*

Worship leaders need to appreciate that they are serving a broad church of people who will not necessarily share a worship leader's particular perspective. If a Church Council has a concern about a worship leader's fidelity to doctrine, then the Council should contact the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary to arrange a review that may be 'out-of-synch' with the normal three-year cycle. If the concern persists after action (to a timeline) prompted by the review, then it must become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Part 11 CPD, including the suspension of the worship leader until the complaints and discipline procedure is completed.

## *Commitment*

If a worship leader shows a disregard for the responsibilities of a worship leader (Standing Order 681), then a formal complaint may be made and will be dealt with in accordance with Part 11 of CPD. If a Church Council has a concern about a worship leader's commitment, then the Council should contact the Circuit Local Preachers' Secretary to arrange a review that may be 'out-of-synch' with the normal three-year cycle. If the concern persists after action (to a timeline) prompted by the review, then it may become a formal complaint dealt with following procedures set out in Part 11 of CPD.