Supporting Lay Employees

A Practice Guide for the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District

The Context and Purpose of this Practice Guide

Standing Orders 438a, 570, 574 and 575 set out clearly the Conference position on lay employment, including the function of the District Lay Employment Sub-committee. Additionally, on the Methodist website, in the Lay Employment Advisory pack, there is extensive guidance on recruitment and employment practice, which is essential reading for all prospective or current employers.

This document is intended to indicate the ways in which the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District will seek to fulfil its obligations regarding lay employment. It also provides guidance for best practice additional to that contained on the website, to demonstrate our commitment to and affirmation of the ministry of the whole people of God.

Those who offer contracts to self-employed people may wish to consider the application of certain aspects of this guide.

The Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District is in a covenant relationship with the other districts that comprise the North-West and Mann region, each of whom it is expected will adopt a version of this document.

The District Lay Employment Sub-committee

In addition to the requirements of SO 438A, the LESC will seek to ensure that the District will appoint:

- A lay employee champion who will gather Lay Employees on a regular basis, for professional development and collaborative working and ensure that details of training courses and funds are made known
- A Chaplain (or Chaplains) for lay employees, to offer pastoral care

Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District is committed to fair pay and a good experience of employment for all Lay Employees; the following should be noted:

1. Fair Pay

- All employees must be paid at, as a minimum, the living wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation. Where the role calls for qualifications e.g. JNC, the appropriate pay scales should be followed.
- Those not employed to a specific external pay scale (such as JNC) should be paid a salary appropriate to the role, and this document offers advice in Appendix 1 to support employers in this.
- The pay of Lay Employees should be increased on an annual basis, either as the Living Wage Foundation recommends, or to match the ministerial stipend increases each year. **See Appendix 1.**

2. Employees should be employed by the most appropriate body. This is often Circuit or District to maximise peer support and create administrative efficiency.

3. Line Management choice – there is significant potential for conflict of interest if the line manager is also the employee's pastor. For this reason, consider alternatives – training for line management is available.
4. A comprehensive Induction Programme. Consider the steps required to enable the employee to operate effectively – see **Appendix 2.**
5. An annual appraisal including target setting should be carried out, including a review and updating of the Job Description and Terms and Conditions of employment to include an increase in pay in line with the living wage or change in role – see **Appendix 3.**
6. Care should be taken when transitioning between roles (for example resulting from career progression and changes in calling) within the same employer to ensure that a full review of working environment and requirements for the role are undertaken.
7. Arrangements for the workplace – consider the optimum base for work, budget for provision of equipment, consideration for home working and lone working. We recognise that lay employees may feel isolated (especially in geographically large circuits or where their work is more specialised). Employees should be encouraged to take opportunities for meeting employees from across the circuit, district and region that are appropriate to the context of their role. There also needs to be consideration given to safeguarding and lone worker policies. See **Appendix 4.**
8. Identification of training and development needs should be made on appointment and at regular intervals, including at each appraisal. See **Appendix 5.**
9. Learning from Exit interviews – see **Appendix 6.**

Recommended Additional Support

It is critical to note that all roles may have an element of vocation to them, and also the Methodist Church notes that some Lay Employee roles have a distinctive leadership element to them that means these roles require additional support, including Pastoral, Evangelism, Youth work and Children's work. SO570 (2(e))

Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District recognises that examples of these roles will include community development workers, lay pastors, family workers, chaplains, third/fourth age workers, pioneers etc. and may include administrators. These roles need to be advised to the Chair of District and Connexional Team by the employing body. SO 575 (5). In practice, currently this means contacting your District Employment Secretary, and Kristie Legg of the Learning Network.

1. Professional Development – a budget and time allocated to this should be included in the job description (for example retreats, reading days, training opportunities, spiritual advisors, courses etc.). See Appendix 5 for potential sources of training.

2. Connection to Leadership groups and engagement with local church. Employing bodies should ensure that the work of the employee is affirmed and supported and that there is a shared vision around the work. Where appropriate, employees should be part of the circuit staff meeting and employing bodies should consult SO510(1)(iv). Where SO510(1)(iv) does not apply consideration should be given to inviting the employee to attend the circuit meeting/church council at least annually. Consider whether they will benefit from being part of District Synod.

Appendix 1: Pay scales on recruitment

Careful consideration should be given when setting an initial salary. To help inform conversations about pay this information has been taken from the Lay Employment Advisory Information on the website where worked examples are given. Section A, B and C and the 9-point scale are given in the lay employment handbook on the website.

There is a basic salary set for an employee which must be at least the living wage. Where the post requires the post holder to have specific experience and/or undertake a higher level of responsibility, the person specification must set this out clearly. Then, in recognition of this, where certain criteria are met, additional points in the areas of qualifications, experience and responsibilities can be awarded to give an increase to the basic hourly salary. The following sections give some idea of the areas where increases to the basic salary could be made. These criteria must be clearly stated in the person specification before the position is advertised. A maximum of 3 points can be awarded in each of the following sections.

It is the recommendation of the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District Policy Committee that the amount per point be 50p.

Section A: Qualifications specifically relevant to the post as set out in the person spec. Choose one of the following:

• A-level, Advanced GNVQ, level 3 NVQ, or equivalent = 1 point • Appropriate undergraduate Diploma or Degree, level 4 NVQ or equivalent = 2 points • Appropriate postgraduate Diploma or Degree, level 5 NVQ, Professional Qualifications or equivalent = 3 points. (Please note that the National Qualifications Framework is in the process of being correlated with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and that a fuller and updated list may be obtained from the Development and Personnel Office, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR)

Section B: Proven Ability (Previously referred to as Experience) • Can demonstrate how proven ability through past experiences shows understanding of the work to be undertaken = 1 point. • Can demonstrate how proven ability through past experiences will contribute to the development of the post = 1 point. • Can demonstrate how proven ability through past experiences will contribute to strategic thinking = 1 point.

Section C: Responsibilities • Does the post hold Managerial and Supervision responsibilities? i.e. the postholder would be required to recruit, train and manage volunteers. If yes = 1 point. • Does the post involve complexity i.e. the post holder would be involved in a range of tasks covering various functions some of which may be described as demanding or complex? If yes = 1 point. • Will the post holder be responsible for making decisions? i.e. difficult or important decisions on a regular basis, within established policy, where many factors must be weighed, and /or makes decisions leading to changes in procedures affecting others. If yes = 1 point.

A maximum of 9 points can be awarded

Appendix 2: Guidelines for lay employee induction programme

Rationale for establishing effective induction processes

A good induction programme is something that takes time to put together, and although a basic outline can be used as a framework for different employees with many things being standard across the spectrum of roles, each different job will have specific elements that need addressing.
It is therefore important that the induction programme is re-visited with each new appointment so that churches are confident that new employees have everything they need to help them settle in, gain confidence and ensure they have the knowledge and support needed to perform their role.

This is not an exhaustive list, but suggestions for the things to consider when putting together an induction programme:

Systems and procedures

The lay employee will need to be given information about how s/he:

- gets paid
- claims expenses
- books annual leave
- monitors and records working hours – consider the value of timesheets, and conditions regarding Time off in Lieu (this should be pre-agreed by line manager).
- identifies and organises professional development training
- accesses IT support when needed
- liaises with the line manager regarding cover if needed when absent

Job overview

The main objectives and desired outcomes of the job should be discussed so that the lay employee is clear what is expected, including the timescale(s).

Who's who

Line manager – as outlined in the policy, it is recommended that the employee's minister should not be their line manager, although it is important that the minister has opportunity to feed into the process. The line manager should be somebody who has the time and skills to undertake regular 1:1 meetings with the lay employee (which will be more frequent in the probationary period of the job), and the ability to set targets and undertake appraisals.

Mentor – it can be beneficial to allocate somebody other than the line manager to undertake more of a mentoring/pastoral role so that the lay employee has somebody to 'bounce ideas off' or discuss minor issues that may arise between 1:1 meetings.

Organisational structure – which is likely to include:

- an overview of and introduction to each member of the leadership team, and their areas of responsibility
- people with responsibility for key ministries within the church
- Church Council – whether and how the lay employee is expected to provide information and present reports to this trustee body

- the wider circuit and relationship between the employing church (or churches) and the rest of the circuit
- any ecumenical or community partnerships

Professional development and peer support

Clear information about what is available and the annual budget and time allocation available to the lay employee.

Introductions to other local lay employees / network meetings and opportunities to connect with them.

Churches/Circuits will need to address the following as part of any induction programme

- setting the lay employee up with telephone and email address and computer
- ensuring access to relevant Safeguarding training
- familiarisation with all relevant policies and procedures
- ensure that the lay employee knows who to contact regarding differing problems

Appendix 3: Appraisals

It is strongly recommended that an appraisal is given at least annually, where the employee performance and priorities are reviewed and documented against the targets set the year before, and targets agreed and recorded for the year to come which would include not just output targets but also personal development and training targets. This process deserves at least an hour of the line manager's and employee's time, should take place in a quiet room free from distractions, and each person should have at least two weeks' notice to prepare for it. There is a Lay Employee Performance and Development Review document which can be found at https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/employees-and-volunteers/supporting-local-ministry/supporting-lay-employees/lay-employment-review-process/

A specific form may not be necessary however, and a simple freestyle approach may also be productive though documentation and agreement of content is essential.

It is appropriate to review and update the job description at the same time, along with a potential salary review in the case of significant change. Ideally a job description should be limited to 5 or 6 paragraphs, one of which is on personal development and training, and should show the expected percentage of employee's time that should be spent on these areas.

With any agreed changes, the terms and conditions of employment should be amended with a simple letter of amendment where necessary if the hours, place of work or Line Manager have changed or the job is fundamentally different from what it was a year before.

Appendix 4: Workplace arrangements

1. Consider the optimum base for work and state it clearly in the Job Description

Much of the work may well be at a church or specified location with the necessary facilities. However, preparation work and report writing might be more effectively performed at home where it might be quieter or have more appropriate facilities.

2. Budget for provision of equipment

The employing body should provide the tools in order to do the job.
Recommended equipment for employees who are at least partially office based is:
Desk
Chair
Lockable storage
Laptop
Phone: either mobile or landline, which should be in a location with reasonable privacy at a reasonable temperature. If the employer is providing a mobile for the conduct of the job an agreement would need to be reached for the fraction of the monthly contract to be paid by the employee to the employer for personal calls if they are allowed. Where the mobile is supplied and owned by the employee, then agreement needs to be reached on the sharing of costs.
If the employer provides a landline, then the employee needs to agree what fraction of the monthly bill is paid by the employee for personal use, if allowed.
There would need to be a policy on personal use of some or all of these items.

Many churches and Circuits do not give adequate attention to these various potential costs and they should be included in the budgetary considerations when looking to employ someone.

3. Potential costs to the employer of home-based working

Employees working from home incur costs providing facilities for working at home, and employers may wish to consider the reimbursement of these costs. One way to determine the cost of such facilities is to use expenses recognised by HMRC which are used by self-employment home workers in their self-employment tax returns. Further guidance can be found at
https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking

When using a room at home for an office / work-space, a proportion of the following costs are accepted by HMRC as allowable expenses against profit for self-employment

Utilities; gas, electric, oil, water
Council Tax
House structural and contents Insurance
Mortgage interest (but not capital repayment) or rent

The proportion of these costs that can be set against the employment is determined as follows

1. Add up the annual total for utility bills, council tax, house insurance and rent or mortgage interest.
2. Divide this total by the number of rooms in the house excluding bathrooms and toilets.
   This gives the annual allowable cost of the room used for home working; divide the answer by 365 to give the daily room cost £Y/day.

   Work out the number of days the room is used for the home-worked part of the employment as follows:-

Total number of days per year = 365 - less weekends of 104 days, less holidays of 28 days = 233 days. If the employment is not full time, i.e. less than 37 hours per week, then multiply 233 by the fraction of the week worked. (If say this is 10 hours per week, then the multiplier is 10/37 and the number of days of home working is 63 days). This result is for where all the work is done at home. Where a fraction is done at home, and a fraction in an employer workplace, then the number of days needs to be reduced by multiplying by the fraction worked at home. Further reductions may be required if the room has shared use. The end result will be a number of days worked at home – X days

3. Multiplying £Y/day by X days gives the allowable cost of supplying the room. Say £A

   The employee when home working will need to use a phone and be connected to the internet. Where the phone is a mobile provided either by the employer or the employee, the handling of these costs have been dealt with in Appendix 4 part 2. Where telephone communications are by use of a landline at the home, then the employer needs to agree on the fraction of costs to be borne by the home employment for both line rental and calls. Say £B

   The employee when working at home will need internet access, and the employer needs to agree what fraction of the internet access costs are borne by the employer. Say £C.

   The total costs incurred by the employee for home working are the sum of A, B and C. It would be reasonable to pay the employee this additional sum (A +B+ C) for working at home with the monthly salary at 1/12 of the annual figure. This payment would be taxed under PAYE and hence the payment would need to be grossed up by 25% so that after deduction of 20% tax, the net figure is sufficient to meet the home working costs.

A worked example:

	Annual Cost	**Cost per day /365**	**Cost per room/8**	**x 155 Working Days pa**	
Gas	£670.50	£1.84	£0.23	£35.59	
Electric	£670.50	£1.84	£0.23	£35.59	
Water	£265.00	£0.73	£0.36	£56.27	
House Insurance	£371.88	£1.02	£0.13	£19.74	
Council Tax	£2,508.00	£6.87	£0.86	£133.13	
Mortgage/Rent	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Total p.a. A	£4,485.88	£12.30	£1.55	£280.32	
Mobile Phone B	£307.20	£0.84		£16.31	Employee owned. Estimated usage 15 % only on home working days.
Landline/BB	£396.00	£1.08	£0.54	£84.08	Home use 50% on home working days only
Total pa				£380.39	
Grossed up payment				475.50	£40 per month

4. Lone working

Employers have a responsibility to asses the risks of lone working both on and off their premises during the course of duty and to take appropriate actions to mitigate those risks. Employees have the responsibility to comply with all arrangements for their safety. Currently the guidance on the Methodist website is found at Appendix 13.3 with a template for risk assessment at 13.4.

Appendix 5: Potential Sources of Training, Learning and Development

Training, Learning and Development can be resourced in many ways:

- On the job training and mentoring – by applying appropriate input from experienced people and by setting stretching objectives the employee can gain significant experience.

- Non-Christian specific skills e.g. computer skills development, social media training, managing volunteers, counselling skills, first aid and food hygiene etc. Training in these areas is available from local Voluntary Services organisations usually at a very small cost, from a local college, or online.

- Christian Specific Skills

    - Learning Network events – there are many courses offered by the Regional Learning Network which may be appropriate.
    - Cliff College has developed and continues to develop many short courses which support learning e.g. Family Ministries and Administrative Ministry
    - The other theological colleges such as Luther King House and the Nazarene Theological College will have additional courses
    - Connecting Disciples (Connexional and local) is run each year and offers workshops on a varied skill set
    - Locally led Methodist & Ecumenical events
    - Safeguarding training is mandatory for any role involving regular work with children or vulnerable adults

- Peer support – employees are encouraged to establish and develop a network of colleagues for mutual support this may be initiated at Circuit, District or Regional level. These might be Communities of Practice, breakfast meetings or online. There are a number of Methodist job specific social media groups to support various roles.

- Knowledge Base – there are several Connexional on-line mailings and professional mailings which will offer background information.

The key point is that development does not always mean going on a course, but there are many courses available. Isolation can be reduced through attending conferences as well as informal gatherings.

Appendix 6: Exit interviews

This appendix supports the use of Appendix 3.1 in the Lay Employment pack on the Methodist website: Exit Interview Proforma. It is recommended that all employees are offered an exit interview. Learning on the improvement of employment practice (which might need to be anonymised) could be passed back to the Circuit and the District. However, there needs to be more than simply filling in and discussing a completed form. A decision needs to be made on who will conduct the interview, bearing in mind that the pro-forma seeks responses on the relationship with the line manager. If need be, the District Lay Employment Sub-committee can be approached for assistance.

- Remember the Pastoral cycle? It ends with celebration. A leaving event that recognises the employee's contribution may be appropriate.
- An exit interview is to help the employer to learn from the experience of the employee. It is for the employer to learn what it could do better in the future and what it has done well this time and can build on in the future.
- The exit interview is in part a time also to celebrate with the employee's achievements, so as well as the questions on this form for the employer to learn from, take the time to celebrate with the employee all they have contributed.
- Only ask the questions you are willing to hear the answers to. For example, only ask them how well resourced they felt through the training you offered if you are open to providing more funds for training in the future.
- Choose the questions that are appropriate in your context. Don't overwhelm the person with too many questions, but equally do value their wisdom; do address tricky issues.
- Be clear with the employee who will see their answers – for example, will the line manager see the comments about them? What are the implications for this if the line manager is being criticised and the employee will remain in the context in another role?
- Decide who will meet with the employee. If possible, send the questions to complete in advance and ask for them to be returned to the person who will be conducting the interview. This could be the minister (if they are not the line manager) or the Chair of the steering group, as well as to the line manager. Make it clear who else will see the responses.
- In this final meeting, celebrate the employee's work and also go through the contents of the exit interview questions. However you get the information and whoever oversees this, be sure to file the document in the employee's personnel file, and be sure to take the learning from the document to the employer.

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