

A MINISTERIAL 1 Applying For Ministry

NB The procedure on applying for ministry is currently under review by Assembly Ministries Committee.

1 A church member who feels that she or he has a Call to the ministry of word and sacraments or Church Related Community Work should mention this in the first place to the minister of the local church. In the absence of a minister, the interim moderator or a neighbouring minister or a trusted elder may be consulted. A ministerial candidate must have been a member of the United Reformed Church for at least two years.

2 The minister or other person consulted may offer one of two courses of action:

a) If the sense of Call is not yet clear, the person concerned may be referred to the next Enquirers' Conference or a more local 'Come and See' event. These occasions present the opportunities and requirements of various forms of ministry in a relaxed way so that those interested may learn more and clarify their own thinking about the various possibilities. The Synod Training & Development Officer for Ministries will give details.

b) If the sense of Call is already reasonably clear and the person is ready to test it by making application, s/he should be referred to the Synod Moderator who will arrange to see the applicant.

3 If the Moderator is convinced that the Call should be tested, the person concerned will be given an application form by the Synod Candidates' Secretary and advised about the next steps.

4 When the application form has been completed and sent to the Synod Candidates' Secretary, notification will be sent to the person's local Church who will be asked to consider the matter in Elders' and Church Meetings. It is recommended that the candidate make a statement to the Church Meeting about the sense of Call when the matter is being discussed.

5 At the same time references will be sought from the candidate's minister and two other people nominated by the candidate.

6 If the Church Meeting agrees to support the application and informs the Candidates' Secretary, the District Council will be asked to arrange for two or three people to interview the candidate and make a recommendation to District Council. They may meet the candidate's partner.

7 If this recommendation is favourable, and is accepted by the Council, arrangements will be made by the Candidates' Secretary for the candidate to attend a National Assessment Conference. These conferences take place several times a year and last for 48 hours.

8 Following this objective and intensive assessment a confidential report (with training recommendations where appropriate) will be sent to the Synod Candidates' Secretary and arrangements will be made for the candidate to be interviewed by the Synod panel. This is where the final decision is currently made concerning a candidate's acceptability.

9 An accepted candidate will embark upon a period of training which normally lasts for four years and is designed to suit the needs of both Church and

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candidate. It will be directed by one of the three authorised URC Resource Centres, normally either Northern or Westminster College.

10 Towards the end of the training programme the student will be introduced to a possible pastorate or other ministerial post through the good offices of the Synod Moderators. See the Guideline on 'the movement of ministers'. The reception and acceptance of a Call to a pastorate, with the concurrence of the District Council, is seen as the final ingredient of the process of assessment for suitability for ministry. With this in mind, a person applying for ministry is asked at the outset to sign an agreement that acceptance for training does not guarantee an eventual call to ministerial service.

11 The above procedure applies to Stipendiary, Non-stipendiary and (with some modifications) Church Related Community Work ministries.