Stipends and Allowances Board

Chairman: Mr. Kevin P Kingston
Secretary: Mr. Wilson Stewart

The Stipends and Allowances Board was established to co-ordinate the work of the Funds which make financial provision for ministers and their families. These Include the Retirement Funds, Medical Fund and Children's Fund.

Stipends are set after consideration of a number of factors including the movements in average earnings, inflation rates and relative exchange rates. In the current year, we are proposing increases of 3.5% in Northern Ireland and 7.0% in the Republic. These figures are ahead of both inflation and the growth in average earnings and therefore represent a real increase in stipends in the two jurisdictions. This is consistent with the policy applied in recent years.

We are also conscious of the need to monitor the differential in the stipends caused by Sterling! Euro movements. The above increases allow us to meet our commitment of achieving a broad parity in sterling equivalent terms by Conference 2004 and are proposed after consideration of the exchange rate expectations for the year ahead.

The past year marks the first year of operation of the new Methodist Ministers' Retirement Income Augmentation Fund. We are grateful to the two independent Administrators for their assistance in running the new fund and we are pleased to recommend further increases to the minimum guaranteed income levels.

MINISTERIAL STIPENDS AND ALLOWANCES

1. Minimum Stipends

Conference directs that commencing on 1st January 2005, the following scale of minimum stipends be paid:

Ministers, including Probationers	*Northern Ireland*	*Republic of Ireland*
Up to 10 years travelling	£16,750	€25,729
11-20 years travelling	£17,560	€26,766
21-30 years travelling	£18,460	€28,015
31 years onwards	£19,348	€29,021

Regulations for Ministers who will have travelled less than 40 years before normal retirement date

Our present assumption is of a 40-year norm for service as a Methodist Minister, with four incremental bands for stipends. In respect of Ministers who, because of their age at the time of entry into the Ministry, will serve less than 40 years, assuming a normal retirement age of 65, a sliding scale will be superimposed on the incremental bands. This sliding scale works by grouping Ministers into six age categories based on their age when they entered the Ministry, namely: 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; and 50 plus years of age. The number of years that a Minister is paid at each incremental band reduces by one year for every five years of age over 25 and is as follows:

Age on entering the Ministry	*No. of years in each incremental band*
25-29	10 years
30-34	9 years

35-39	8 years
40-44	7 years
45-49	6 years
50+	5 years

To determine what incremental band a Minister is in at any given time, the total number of years to be served (i.e. 65 minus age on entering the Ministry) is worked out. The total number of years to be served is divided up into portions according to the number of years to be paid at each incremental band, counting back from the normal retirement date.

2. Allowances from April, 2003

	Northern Ireland	*Republic of Ireland*
(a) Taxable Car Allowance:		
Up to 8,000 miles	£756	Nil
Over 8,000 miles	Nil	Nil
(b) Circuit Mileage (including Non-Stipendiary Ministers)		
First 4,000 miles	40.0p	97.91 cents
Next 6,000 miles	40.0p	48.77 cents
Over 10,000 miles	25.0p	48.77 cents
(c) Connexional Travel		
For first 60 miles	25.0p	32.0 cents
Thereafter	15.0p	19.0 cents

(d) Local Non-Stipendiary Ministers receive circuit mileage as at (b).
Taxable Car Allowance is not payable

(e) Light, Heat and Telephone Rebate 75% 75%

(f) Retired Ministers -
Allowances for Services of Worship

£30 minimum per service plus travel at 28p per mile	€38 minimum per service, plus travel at 36 cents per mile

3. Circuit Evangelists

Conference directs that commencing on 1st January 2005, the following scale of minimum stipends be paid to Circuit Evangelists:

	Northern Ireland	*Republic of Ireland*
Stipends	£14,640	€22,109
Mileage Allowances	28p per mile or Inland Revenue rate at discretion of Circuit	36 cents per mile or Revenue Commissioners rate at discretion of Circuit

AGENDA

1 The Conference adopts the report.

2.The Conference directs that commencing on the 1st January 2005 the scale of minimum stipends be as detailed in the report, and that the scale o allowances as set out in the report be paid with effect from 5th April 2004.

3.The Conference re-appoints the Ministerial Secretary and Treasurer of the Methodist Ministers' Medical Fund, Rev. H. M. Agnew, the Ministerial Treasurer and Secretary of the Stipends and Allowances Board, Rev. T. H. S McGuffin, and the Lay Secretary, Mr. Wilson Stewart.