

Protocols for the Nomination and Appointment of Local Preachers in the Methodist Church in Ireland

1. When an individual believes that God is calling her/him to become a Local Preacher and wants to test this call he/she will first have a conversation with her/his local Minister, who in turn shall inform the Superintendent Minister. Superintendent Ministers shall give special attention to suitable men and women in their Circuits, and, in co-operation with other Ministers and Local Preachers, as far as possible, assist in preparing them for this office.
2. The Superintendent Minister shall have the responsibility of presenting to the Local Preachers' Meeting as candidates for appointment as Local Preachers, persons who:
 - (a) are able to give an account of their journey of faith and call to preach,
 - (b) give evidence of genuine piety,
 - (c) are zealous in promoting the work of God,
 - (d) have the ability to express themselves with sufficient readiness and clarity,
 - (e) intend to complete the training prescribed by Conference in the time allocated.

At the same time the Superintendent shall inform the Connexional Ministerial Local Preachers' Secretary of the applicant's name and contact details so that they may be sent an Application Pack.

The Local Preachers' Meeting shall examine the applicant using the set pro- forma questions. If satisfied that the applicant is suitable, it shall recommend to the Circuit Executive that the applicant be received as a 'Local Preacher in Training'.

If the Circuit Executive agrees, the applicant will complete the Application Form and submit it, together with all supporting documentation, to her/his Superintendent Minister.

In any circuit where there is no Local Preachers' Meeting the duties of the Local Preachers' Meeting shall be undertaken by the Circuit Executive.

3. The Superintendent Minister shall:

- (a) immediately after the Circuit Executive forward the applicant's Application Form and all supporting documentation (names of referees and any application for accreditation of prior learning) to the Connexional Local Preachers' Ministerial Secretary.
- (b) in December of each year submit a written report on each Local Preacher in Training to the Connexional Local Preachers' Ministerial Secretary.

4. The Connexional Local Preachers' Committee shall:

- (a) scrutinise the application and confirm, or not, the recommendation of the Circuit Executive,
- (b) assess any application for accreditation of prior learning,
- (c) specify the training pathway that is best suited in the form of a Learning Plan,
- (d) review and assess the written reports submitted by the Circuit Superintendent each December.

5. Local Preachers in Training are required to:

- (a) undertake training as prescribed by the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee and defined in the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers'.
- (b) study diligently the Word of God.
- (c) keep a Worship Portfolio as defined in the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers'.
- (d) keep a Log of Practical Experience as defined in the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers'.

6. The period in training shall normally be not less than one year and not more than four years, at the end of which the Local Preacher in training shall:

- (a) conduct an appraisal service, as arranged by the Superintendent Minister.
- (b) present to the Local Preachers' Meeting
 - (i) her/his Log of Practical Experience,
 - (ii) her/his Worship Portfolio,
 - (iii) a list of the books read,

(c) undergo, in the Local Preachers' Meeting, an interview conducted by the Superintendent Minister or under her/his direction, using the pro-forma set of questions relating to her/his

- (i) journey of faith,
- (ii) call to preach,
- (iii) Worship Portfolio and Log of Practical Experience,
- (iv) the books he/she has read,
- (v) synopsis of one of John Wesley's sermons,
- (vi) knowledge of and loyalty to Christian doctrine and, in particular, Methodist doctrine,
- (vii) willingness to submit to Methodist discipline.

In any circuit where there is no Local Preachers' Meeting the duties of the Local Preachers' Meeting shall be undertaken by the Circuit Executive.

7. When the candidate has satisfactorily completed the requirements in para- graphs 6B.07 and 6B.08 the Superintendent Minister shall report accordingly to the Circuit Executive and if the candidate's general effectiveness in preaching and in Christian work and her/his personal character are considered satisfactory by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, the Circuit Executive shall recommend to the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee that the candidate be received as a 'fully accredited' Local Preacher.

The Superintendent Minister shall then forward to the Connexional Local Preachers' Ministerial Secretary:

- (a) the standard Report Form,
- (b) the candidate's Worship Portfolio,
- (c) the candidate's Log of Practical Experience

The Connexional Local Preacher's Committee shall examine all the material and, if satisfied, shall issue a Certificate of Accreditation, to be presented at a recognition service locally.

The names of 'fully accredited' Local Preachers accepted during that Connexional year shall be recorded in the ensuing Minutes of Conference.

8. If a candidate has not completed the requirements set out in paragraphs 6B.07 and 6B.08 above by the end of the four-year period, he/she may apply through the Local Preachers' Meeting to the Circuit Executive to remain in training for an extended period, renewable annually. This renewal will be on the recommendation of the Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting and with the approval of the Circuit Executive. The applicant shall be required to explain why the requirements have not been met. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the consent of the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee, shall the total period in training exceed eight years. If after this further period the requirements are still not completed, he/she shall cease to be regarded as a Local Preacher in training.