

## Elders in Local Leadership Policy – Yorkshire Synod

### 1. Discerning the call and appointment of an Elder in Local Leadership to a local church

- 1.1 The concept of 'call' is fundamental to our understanding of discipleship. The Bible says much about the variety of tasks to which people may be called, perhaps most notably in Paul's use of the image of the body (eg.1 Corinthians 12). The 'call' is primarily the call of God but may be heard and interpreted in various ways.
- 1.2 Each Elder in Local Leadership position is unique and the role is not transferrable outside the local church or the team ministry to which they have been appointed.
- 1.3 All Elders in Local Leadership must be Elders in the United Reformed Church, and the Marks of Ministry for Elders in Local Leadership, the Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for Elders (General Assembly Reports 2010, Appendix 3c) and the Disciplinary Policy for Office Holders apply to all Elders in Local Leadership.
- 1.4 As with any ministry within the URC, call is a discernment process. Call is always a gradual process of coming to know who God is calling you to be. Therefore, the candidate must first speak with their Synod Moderator about their sense of call and the vocation to which they feel called.
- 1.5 If the Synod Moderator discerns a sense of call it is at this point that exploration will be given to the role they will fulfil in the life of their local church. The Synod Moderator and Pastoral Convener shall determine whether the local church is in agreement to the appointment of an Elder in Local Leadership. If so, the Synod Moderator shall forward their details to the Ministries Committee Convener.
- 1.6 The Ministries Committee Convener shall supply an application form to the candidate setting out details of the candidate's:
  - Journey of faith;
  - Character/Spiritual Maturity;
  - Prior local church experience, including positions of responsibility held, with brief summary of dates and nature of duties, and experience of the wider councils of the church (e.g. attendance at Synod meetings, General Assembly, membership of national or Synod committees);
  - Previous theological studies (if any) (e.g. theology degree, TLS Foundation Course, accredited lay preacher training in the United Reformed Church or another denomination);
  - Participation in "Stepwise" or similar courses exploring discipleship;
  - Previous practical training (e.g. elders' training courses – give detail of subject-matter covered);
  - Experience of reflective practice;
  - Life experience/training gained in workplace;
  - Other information the candidate considers relevant to assessment of their training needs.
- 1.7 Upon receipt of the completed application form, the Ministries Committee Convener:
  - a) takes up references (one from minister/interim moderator and one other);
  - b) organises an assessed service where the call is to a preaching ministry (normally 2 people) and a written report of the service;

- c) organises a Synod interview and a written report. The candidate is able to bring a 'supporter' who will not be part of the formal interview but may be invited to speak at the end of the interview.

## 2. Safer Appointment of Elders in Local Leadership

The United Reformed Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all within our church communities. The United Reformed Church recognises the importance of carefully selecting, training and supporting all those with any responsibility within the Church. Synods will use the process for the Safer Election of Elders. <https://urc.org.uk/urc-ministries/safer-election-of-elders/>

## 3. Training

3.1 If the candidate is successful, the training needs will be agreed by Ministries Committee. This could be one of:

- a) Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers
- b) Assembly Accredited Lay Pioneers
- c) URC Church Leadership Programme
- d) An equivalent Synod Course as agreed by Ministries Committee.

Funding for training will be through the 'normal' route for funding

- i) From the individual and/or
- ii) The local church
- iii) The Synod and/or
- iv) Education & Learning

### 3.2 Applicants

- a) attend the in person You're Welcome: An Ethos and History of the URC course held at Westminster College, Cambridge;
- b) will undergo safeguarding training and other mandatory training appropriate to their role as well as any further training which the denomination shall determine from time to time;
- c) will receive an annual grant of £300, which will be available [equivalent to Lay Preachers] for further training;

### 3.3 Upon completion of training the Synod Moderator or their representative shall:

- a) meet with the elders of the local church to finalise the role description and Terms of Settlement;
- b) organise a Service of Commissioning for the Elder in Local Leadership.

## 4. Oversight.

All Elders in Local Leadership must be subject to the supervision of a minister of Word and Sacraments who will be appointed as a Principal Contact. When making the appointment of any Elder in Local Leadership it is the responsibility of the Synod to ensure that adequate provision is made to ensure that such oversight is carried out.

## 5. Appointments:

The initial appointment shall be for 3 years with a review at year 2.5 with the possibility of renewal.