

The United Reformed Church West Midlands Synod



Taking Stock Accompanied Reflection and Self-Appraisal for Ministers



In the United Reformed Church, those who believe they are called by God to the ministry of Word and Sacraments have that sense of call tested and if confirmed acknowledged by the Church. The Church also gives the authority for the exercising of that ministry.

The basic theological concept behind a scheme of ministerial review is that we are all accountable to God for the discharge of the ministry graciously given to us. A framework in which we regularly stand back and reflect can be seen as our recognition of that basic accountability.

There are other New Testament themes behind this scheme. These include the full use of gifts and talents in God's service; the concept of stewardship; and the need for each of us to play our proper part in the life of the Body so that it grows and develops. It is appropriate, therefore, that those called to ministry should regularly 'take stock' of that ministry, and to do so as objectively as possible. It might be reasoned that such 'taking stock' could best be achieved through personal prayer and reflection. But we are not always the best people to apprise ourselves without support. It is hard to be objective and it is not always easy to discern God's intention in our lives.

Hence this booklet has been designed as a means of helping those in all types of ministry to reflect on that ministry and to strengthen and develop it.

In the light of discussions which it is suggested you have had with those most closely involved with you in the exercise of your ministry, you should try to answer all relevant questions fully but concisely; this will certainly help you and your trained appraisal partner in the session where you consider what can be drawn from your reflections about the past and your hopes for the future.

The goal of this process is the mutual enrichment of your ministry in your post/pastorate as an individual and, just as importantly, as part of a collaborative team; this reflects the assumption accepted by the Church that the ministry and mission of a local church is a collaborative partnership of the members and the minister, not the sole responsibility of the minister as it will be in different ways in any other post. For those in other types of ministry, including chaplains and SCM posts, the team will probably consist of work colleagues. CRCWs will be working with congregations, the project management committee and community groups. For this reason the review takes place in the context of your current role description and of the pastorates/posts developing mission strategy.

As background information for your Appraisal Partner, please provide the following details: -

Name:

Church(es) or post:

Family situation

Part 1: Personal Reflection

As you work through this section, please write your thoughts down or, if you are working from an electronic copy, type them in. Whether you wish to discuss these questions with your partner or not, it will certainly assist your partner to know your thoughts when Part 2 is under discussion.

1.1 What have been the highs and lows in your personal life in the last four years?

1.2 How does your 'job' affect your personal life? Do you have enough time to relax? Are you able to spend an adequate amount of time with your family?

1.3 Do you feel that the work makes unreasonable demands on you? For ministers in pastoral charge – do you feel that the church(es) have unreasonable expectations? Alternatively are your church(es) supportive and encouraging and concerned that you should not be overburdened? CRCWs should include comment on the management committee and community groups; those in SCM posts should include comment on the management/support group.

1.4 Are there any pressures on you – finance, health concerns, family – that impact negatively on your Ministry?

2.1 Do you feel that you have matured spiritually in the last couple of years, or just stagnated? Why do you think this is?

2.2 In terms of spiritual and personal development, which study days/retreats/workshops/summer schools that you have attended in the last two years that have been of real benefit? Which haven't? Why?

2.3 Are you happy with your prayer life?

2.4 Has your theological perspective or have your personal priorities changed in the last two years? If so, what prompted the change?

3.1 What have been the highs and lows of the last four years in your ministry? What are their good points, what are their bad? Do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about your ministry? Why?

3.2 Are there individuals, either in your churches, community groups or other organisations with which you are involved, or colleagues with whom you find it difficult to get along? What is the core of the problem? Is there anything you could or should do about it?

4.1 Have you felt a need for support from outside your area of ministry (churches, chaplaincy, management committee)? Was it forthcoming? Where did it come from? If a similar situation recurred again, where would or could you seek help?

5.1 Are there other personal issues that trouble you?

Part 2: Your Assessment of your ministerial activities

The function of this section is to review what has happened in your Ministry in the last couple of years, and then to compare the reality with the expectations of two years ago, as embodied in your role description. We have attempted to provide a reasonably exhaustive list of your potential activities but you may wish to add to it.

Under each heading or sub-heading, please

- Look at the amount of time you spend on this activity.
- Consider whether it is reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments
- Consider whether it is adequate: is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?
- Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry

Rank the activities on a scale of 1 – 7 (where 1 is the most time spent and 7 the least time).

When considering the ‘time’ aspect, take into consideration the preparation time required for a particular activity.

MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT (CRCWs go to page 14):

	Amount of time spent on this?	Is it reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments	Is it adequate; is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?	Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry
1.1. Worship leading and preaching				
In my own church(es)				
Elsewhere				

	Amount of time spent on this?	Is it reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments	Is it adequate; is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?	Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry
1.2. Teaching and Nurture				
Children and young people				
Elders and other church leaders				
Other groups				
Facilitating the training of others in this area				
Tutoring or mentoring				
1.3. Pastoral care and support				
Home/hospital visiting				
Marriage/baptism/preparation/bereavement/relationship/family support: counseling				
Handling spontaneous pleas for help e.g. from the homeless				
Speaking to church groups				
1.4. Business Meetings (e.g. Elders meetings, Synod Committees, Governors' meetings, Trustees/Directors meetings)				
Chairing				
Participation in other ways				

	Amount of time spent on this?	Is it reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments	Is it adequate; is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?	Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry
1.5. Evangelism				
Events, projects				
Personal				
Speaking to groups outside the church				
Training and encouraging others				
1.6. Social functions <i>Within the church</i>				
organising				
attending				
1.7. Social functions <i>Elsewhere</i>				
organising				
attending				
1.8. Other activities				
Chaplaincy				
Writing				
Private study				
Prayer				

	Amount of time spent on this?	Is it reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments	Is it adequate; is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?	Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry
Other activities continued				
Ecumenism				
Vision building				
Your buildings!				
Political issues				
Social work within the local community plugging the gap, when tasks are not done, or inadequately done by others				

Please add any further activities below:

CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS:

	Amount of time spent on this?	Is it reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments	Is it adequate; is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?	Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry
1.1. Worship leading and preaching				
In my own church(es)				
Elsewhere				
1.2. Teaching, Nurture and Training				
Children and young people in church				
Children and young people in community				
Elders and other church leaders				
Community groups				
Facilitating the training of others in this area				
Tutoring, mentoring or supervising in the church				
Tutoring, mentoring or supervising in the community				
1.3. Pastoral care and support				
Handling spontaneous pleas for help e.g. from the homeless				
Speaking to church groups				

	Amount of time spent on this?	Is it reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments	Is it adequate; is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?	Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry
1.4. Business Meetings (e.g. Elders meetings, Synod Committees, Governors' meetings, Trustees/Directors meetings, voluntary sector or statutory sector)				
Chairing				
Participation in other ways				
1.5. Evangelism				
Personal				
Attending events				
1.6. Social functions <i>Within the church</i>				
organising				
attending				
1.7. Social functions <i>Elsewhere</i>				
organising				
attending				
1.8. Other activities				
Writing				
Private study				
Prayer				
Organising events				
Campaigning				

	Amount of time spent on this?	Is it reasonable, in proportion to your other commitments	Is it adequate; is it a source of frustration that you cannot give more time to this area of Ministry?	Rate your effectiveness in this area of Ministry
Other activities continued				
Ecumenism				
Vision building				
Your buildings!				
Political issues				
Social work within the local community plugging the gap, when tasks are not done, or inadequately done by others				

Please add any further activities below:

2.1. Having reviewed your activities for the last couple of years please append a copy of your current role description. Indicate below the priorities implicit within it.

2.2. Have the emphases in your Ministry reflected your role description? If, in reality your time usage and priorities has differed significantly from that anticipated two years ago, why has this happened? Are the reasons good (a growing church requiring more emphasis on teaching!) or bad (too much gap plugging)?

2.3. Your pastorate is now reviewing its Mission Strategy. Do you see a need for changes in your role as a result of this review? Are there changes that you should be pressing for, both in the Mission Strategy and in your role description, to address the problems and enable your ministry to be more effective in the future? For those in SCM posts and Chaplaincies – What changes need to be made to your role description to enable your ministry to be more effective in the light of any changes in your work context?

2.4. Are there areas of your Ministry where you believe that additional training would increase your effectiveness?

Part 3: And finally 'TAKING STOCK' 20.....

Please complete this section at the end of, or soon after, the meeting with your Appraisal Partner.

You should then have a clear understanding as to whether you should suggest to the Elders/Members/Colleagues that your role description and key responsibilities and objectives should be amended or redefined. You should also know what additional training you might seek in your discussion with the Synod Training Officer.

1.1. As a result of this process I perceive my strengths to be:

1.2. The special skills/knowledge/aptitude/interest I would like to use more and share in my ministry are:

1.3. The areas I would like to reflect on or discuss further are:

1.4. I would like further support and EM3 training in the next six months:

1.5. I would like further support and EM3 training in the next year:

1.6. I would like further support and EM3 training in the next two years:

1.7. When are you due a Sabbatical?

1.8. How would you like to use that Sabbatical?

1.9. The key responsibilities and objectives which I believe are appropriate for the future/next two years, and would like to discuss with Elders, Colleagues or Management Committee are:

1.10. My role description should be amended (as indicated)/is still valid.

Signed: _____

Date: _____