

## **Synod Deployment Policy Guidelines**

**1. A genuine sense of "Being a living Church" rather than a maintained institution.**

Sustain and develop a fellowship by focusing on the word of God in Bible, prayer and evangelism. (Vision 4 Life)

**2. A recovered focus on mission.**

Encourage the creative maintenance and deployment of what we have inherited as the raw material of imaginative mission.

**3. A development of team ministry.**

Ministers of Word and Sacrament (stipendiary and non-stipendiary), Lay Preachers, Local leaders, CRCWs, Special Category Ministers and Ministers of other denominations will work with mutual support and accountability – a model for collaborative ministry in Mission Partnerships and across the Synod.

**4. Calling of ministers to work in Mission Partnerships.**

A call may be issued to a Minister to serve within a Mission Partnership by the constituent churches.

**5. Regular reviews.**

Ministers, pastorates and Mission Partnerships will engage in regular review as per Assembly guidelines (2006). [Pilot late 2007, on line 2008 onwards.]

**6. Flexible Ministry**

In respect of any call, and/or in the light of a particular review, Synod may expect ministers to engage in different duties and in a different location from those to which they were originally called. Synod will endeavour to support ministers in this eventuality.

**7. Being proactive**

Help Mission Partnerships to determine the best use of ministry currently available, and so build up a Synod strategy for deployment and investment for mission.

**8. Fair use of stipendiary Ministers of Word and Sacrament.**

Use our fair share of Special Category Ministry and CRCW posts to develop mission and new ways of being Church.

Honour ecumenical commitments already made and engage in full consultation with partners in relation to deployment of ministers within LEPs.

Operate on a minimal 10% vacancy rate.

**9. A financially sustainable deployed ministry funded by the churches and synod.**

Release generous giving from our churches in response to God's goodness and give thanks for it.

Continue to raise M&M pledge in consultation with churches, taking account of their individual financial sustainability and amount of ministry received.

Graciously receive subsidies from the wider URC in respect of Special Category Ministry and other pieces of mission work.

## Northern Synod Deployment 2007 onwards

### General Assembly Deployment

General Assembly some years ago agreed stipendiary minister numbers would track membership. This means the URC target for Stipendiary Ministers in 2006 was 565 for England, Scotland and Wales. NSM's and Special Category Ministers are not included. The age profile of our ministers' means that significant proportions of them will retire in these next years. It is projected that the target will reduce to 482 by 2010. A very hard and significant reduction. By then the number of ministers in the pool may well be less than there are scoped pastorates for and therefore we need to start thinking about vocations and recruitment now.

### Northern Synod

In Northern the 2007 end of year target is 30, yet in March we had 38 ministers in post. With retirements and movements this has reduced to 34. By the end of 2010 our target is 26. Hence we are aiming to drop stipendiary ministry by 4 in 2007 and by a further 4 in 2008/9 to achieve this is going to cut deep and be very hard. It is hoped to do it when there is movement of ministers by those in situ taking on further responsibilities.

Why is it important that this is managed? It is better to plan where we are going to put our scarce paid ministry than end up with longer and longer vacancies or having to have a moratorium on declaring vacancies.

### Mission Partnerships – and where the cuts are happening?

	Reducing from	To	Year
North Northumberland	2.5 + .5 SCM + Tony Ritchie	1.5 + .5 SCM	2007
Mid Northumberland	3.5	2.5	2011
SENEA (although when Seaton Delaval vacant expectation URC will provide for that LEP)	1 + NSM	No change	
9 Churches	5	4	2008
North Tyne	1	No change	
Newcastle North/Central	2.5 in alt. ecumenical ministries 3.5 in URC's	No change 3 or 2	2007/8
Newcastle East/Coast	4	3	2011
Gateshead	2	No change	
Sunderland/South Tyneside	5 + CRCW	3 + CRCW	2006/7
County Durham	3 + NSM	2.5 + NSM	2008
Tees and Swale	3	2.5	2007
Teesside SE	3 + SCM	No change	

Allowing for a vacancy rate of 10-20% this gets us into the range of our targets and with the severity of the cuts it does not seem feasible to get nearer. However, it becomes increasingly difficult to see whether further cuts can take place. This means we need to explore our understanding of ministry and the role of paid ministers within the whole picture.