

The **Methodist** Church   
**Sheffield District**



# **Mission Policy**

The text of this booklet and the District Mission Policy can be found on the District website – [www.sheffieldmethodist.org](http://www.sheffieldmethodist.org) - together with more examples of work across the District which relate to the priorities of the Policy.

*Two important notes:*

*For the purpose of clarity, we recognise that “District” can have the meanings of:*

- *The District as an entity operating in its Synod, District Policy Committee, other committees and groups and through its officers and staff.*
- *The constituent parts of the District, namely its Circuits, Churches and members.*

*Throughout this document, the principal understanding is of the District as an entity. However, in agreeing it, the Synod is expressing the hope that local Church and Circuit policies will be consistent with what is set out here.*

*“Officers” refers to those appointed by Synod and “staff” to those employed by the District.*

## Introduction

I am very glad to invite you to read and use the Sheffield District Mission Policy.

We live in challenging and exciting times. In the Church, we are faced with both continuing decline and clear signs of fresh life.

We need a sense of direction if we are to chart a course through such choppy waters and catch the wind of the Spirit as God seeks to move us to new places. There are some key questions: what values are we trying to live and work by; what are our priorities and how do we intend to put them into practice?

This Mission Policy document, agreed by the Synod in the Spring of 2008, sets out how this District answers those questions at this time in our shared life.

We are producing it as a booklet because we want it to be widely known; and because we hope that Circuits and Churches will use it and be guided by it as they reflect on their own life and future.

This is a **Mission Policy**. **What is mission?** This policy offers an answer for us in our context. We hope that it has a breadth and depth which will inspire and stimulate people across the District. As well as the policy itself, you will find here some helpful ideas about what others have done.

Sometimes Churches and Circuits need decisions from the District because it has responsibilities in relation to, for example, property consents, grant making and stationing. This policy seeks to make sure that the criteria we use are transparent and based on mission priorities.

The District Leadership Team will initiate annual checks of the policy and a thorough review every three years. If you have comments or suggestions about it, please get in touch with me.

I commend the District Mission Policy to each member, Church and Circuit in the District.

*Vernon Marsh*  
*District Chair*

## Summary

This policy is intended to guide and focus not only the work of the District (including the Synod, the Policy Committee and other committees and groups, and its officers and staff), but also all the churches and circuits which make up the Sheffield District.

It is set out in three broad areas, beginning with two sections which describe:

- ❖ the **purpose** of the District,
- ❖ the **core values** which the District holds in fulfilling that purpose (page 6).

The role of the District is not always well understood, and this part of the policy seeks to address that. It makes clear that the District exists to support churches and circuits in their work.

For the first time the District has declared what its core values are as it fulfils this role. These are values to which individual churches and circuits may also wish to subscribe.

The heart of the policy is in sections 3 and 4 which present eleven **priorities** for the District and describe how we intend to **implement and resource** them (pages 7 to 12).

It does the latter under eight headings, which relate to:

- ❖ supporting mission oriented work where resources are lacking
- ❖ encouraging fresh ways of being church
- ❖ developing confidence in speaking of God
- ❖ supporting community development and action for justice
- ❖ encouraging church and circuit reviews
- ❖ offering opportunities for learning and development

- ❖ building partnerships
- ❖ making best use of personnel resources

Each of these is accompanied by a variety of specific actions which the District intends to take through its structures, officers and staff. Also included are examples of work currently taking place in the District which relate to the priorities. Further examples can be found on the District website at [www.sheffieldmethodist.org](http://www.sheffieldmethodist.org).

Finally, the policy sets out in section 5 the criteria which will be used to:

- ❖ determine **stationing** priorities,
- ❖ assess **property schemes** and
- ❖ consider **grant applications** (pages 13 to 15).

In greater detail than ever before, this section makes clear the information which churches and circuits must be able to make available to the District so that decisions can be made about priorities in these three important areas.

In the case of **stationing**, the section sets out the scoring system which will be used to decide the order of priority in which our appointments will be called during the connexional stationing matching process. That order will be agreed at a meeting of the District Chair and Lay Stationing representative with a Circuit Steward from each of the Circuits concerned.

Property consents and District grant applications have two very similar sets of criteria which, in making applications, churches and circuits must be able to show that they can meet. A set of **additional notes** gives further guidance about how the District will assess grant applications.

## **1. The purpose of the District's Mission**

The Sheffield District exists to support and enable the work of the Churches and Circuits in the District, for themselves and others, to:

- seek to become, increasingly, followers of Jesus Christ
- increase awareness of God's presence and celebrate God's love
- help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care
- be good neighbours to people in need and challenge injustice
- make more followers of Jesus Christ.

The District also has a role in relation to the region and issues of concern in public life across the District.

## **2. The core values by which the District lives out this purpose are to:**

- underpin everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer
- nurture a culture in the Church which is mission oriented, people-centred and flexible
- affirm the importance of wise and proper use of resources of people, property and finance
- recognise those fragile pieces of work that need to be sustained as a mission priority
- give attention to areas where new work should be begun.

### **3. The priorities of the District are to:**

*(These are not ranked in order of priority.)*

- support and affirm the value of existing work which focuses on mission
- encourage and support mission orientated work in Churches and Circuits which lack financial or other resources
- encourage fresh ways of being Church
- develop confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved
- support community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor – in Britain and worldwide
- encourage Circuits and Churches to review their life and their use of resources
- foster a climate of learning and development
- build partnerships with other churches, faith groups and organisations with whom we share common values
- act in ways that contribute to the care of the earth
- encourage cross-border cooperation between Circuits
- explore spirituality and nurture spirituality in others.

### **4. Implementing and Resourcing the District's priorities**

*The District will implement and resource its priorities through the following actions and by using its stationing, property and funding functions. Where District Groups are not specifically mentioned, it is nonetheless assumed that they also will implement, resource and support the policies in this document.*

**i. Encouraging and supporting new and existing mission oriented work in Churches and Circuits which lack financial or other resources**

The District will

- encourage Circuits not to allow Churches and projects to disappear simply because they are not self-sustaining
- use its resources to help to sustain such work where appropriate
- encourage, where appropriate, sharing of resources across Circuit boundaries
- encourage further development through the work of the District staff and officers.

*Retford Circuit set up a post of Deacon as a Children's and Family Worker to develop links with those outside church life. Initiatives include Bus Stop Coffee for carers waiting for their children returning from School; a Men's Breakfast Club; helping with schools' workers funded mainly by the Anglican Church; developing a Street Pastors group.*

*From 2008 the Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit is employing a children's worker, mainly in the north of the circuit, to make contact with children and integrate them into church-based children's clubs. Operation Kickstart will seek to recruit a team of volunteers, mostly young people, who will be co-ordinated by the worker to go into schools & churches. The project is in receipt of connexional funding.*

## ii. Encouraging fresh ways of being Church

The District will encourage the development of new initiatives, including through the work of the District staff and officers.

*Ultraviolet is Ecclesall's "Church in a different spectrum", a creative and informal fresh expression of church for the missing generations and the spiritually adventurous. Ultraviolet welcomes all and focuses on community, creativity and prayer.*

*The InspYre project in the same circuit has encouraged and supported existing and developing youth work in several of the circuit churches and encouraged and supported students in being trained for youth work.*

*The District employs Rachel McCallam in the role of Mission and Development Enabler in order to support churches and circuits in a variety of ways. These include:*

- ~ assisting the development of new and creative ways of being church, with particular relevance to young people, in order to respond to the changing spiritual needs of a diverse society;*
- ~ reviewing present structures in order to make the best use of our properties and resources;*
- ~ encouraging collaborative working and ecumenical partnerships to facilitate the growth and expansion of imaginative and pertinent Mission projects within each circuit's community.*

### iii. Developing confidence in speaking of God

The District will

- encourage new ventures in evangelism
- offer training and support to Churches and Circuits through the work of the District staff and officers
- support the work of the Churches and Circuits through the District Evangelism Action Group.

*'I never would have dreamt I could have spoken like that two years ago.' The words of a volunteer in the Terminus Cafe, after a meaningful conversation about God with a drug user. The Terminus Initiative, of which the cafe is one project, began as a response to meeting the needs of the Lowedges community. It has found that most non-church goers are happy to discuss their spiritual needs. So it provides opportunities for local Christians to increase their faith and confidence in God as they share God's love by their words and actions.*

*Clifton church has been pioneering a door-to-door calling ministry in the local neighbourhood to introduce the church to local residents and to seek prayer requests from them. The church is planning to open a community cafe in the coming year. The outreach ministry has been supported and encouraged by friends from the Hope of Rotherham Church.*

#### **iv. Supporting community development and action for justice**

The District will

- associate itself with the work, within the District, of Church Action on Poverty
- support the work of Together for Regeneration
- associate itself with appropriate action against those who seek to divide our communities (for example, at election time)
- encourage involvement in community projects which seek to empower those who are socially excluded
- support that involvement through its grant-making and through the work of the District staff and officers who will assist Churches and Circuits in developing projects
- work towards being a Fairtrade District
- promote concern for international and national issues of justice, peace and care of the environment through its Service Action Group.

*Victoria Church (Sheffield East Circuit) in partnership with local groups and individuals set up a charity to run a community cafe. With grant funding it serves the local community in a disadvantaged area, especially the elderly, those who live alone, parents with young children and the unemployed. As well as providing affordable, healthy meals, the café offers a meeting place which encourages social inclusion and builds community relationships. A catalyst for other activities such as promoting fair trade and an environmental project, it offers a 'safe space', for people to feel at home in the building before venturing into other activities, including worship.*

## v. Encouraging Church and Circuit Reviews

The District will

- encourage Local Church and Circuit review
- conduct a District review of the shape and number of Circuits in the District.

*When two circuits became one, the new Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit undertook a fundamental review, leading to several radical outcomes.*

- 1) *A mindset that the Circuit is the primary unit of Church - one of over 1,000 people, with a team of 10 staff, on 20 mission sites.*
- 2) *Commitment to working in collaborative partnership as a staff: three sections across the circuit, with ministers and lay employees working as teams - not just in their own designated churches.*
- 3) *Restructuring to allow growth: by centralising administration, resourcing growth where it is happening and encouraging each church to have a clear focus on its contribution.*

*More information is on the circuit's website ([www.rdv-circuit.org.uk](http://www.rdv-circuit.org.uk)) and the Dovetail section in particular.*

*Hallam Church (Sheffield West circuit) regularly returns to its Vision statement at church councils, general church meetings and occasional Sunday services, helping it to focus on one particular part of the Vision each year. Recently the church explored its mission work in the community, by looking at a variety of ways of making the Christian message more visible. This included an open barbecue with bouncy castle, with immediate church neighbours invited as guests.*

## vi. Offering opportunities for learning and development

The District will

- offer each year a programme of training through its Training Enabling Group
- work with the Methodist Regional Training Network, the ecumenical Regional Training Partnership and with the regional Training Officers
- support and resource Continuing Development in Ministry
- utilise and work with the Urban Theology Unit and Cliff College.

*Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit offers several opportunities each year to aid learning and development. Recent examples included: a circuit day on Fresh Expressions, a Quiet Day, evenings on human trafficking, health and safety policy and a half-day on the circuit's project in Lesotho, a weekend Circuit Bible Festival, a day seminar on healing ministry, a 7 week worship leaders' course and bible teaching/discussion courses based at one church but drawing people from across the circuit and beyond.*

*Along with UTU, York Institute of Community Theology and Wesley Study Centre, Sheffield District is one of six, making up the Yorkshire & North East Training Forum. Three Training Officers make available learning, training and formation for lay and ordained people to meet Connexional and regional requirements. The TO for the Sheffield and West Yorkshire districts, Caroline Riley, specialises in the implementation of Creating Safer Space (the Connexional training framework for safeguarding) and for the new Annual Development review process for ministers. She works in partnership with district groups, ecumenical colleagues and other agencies.*

## **vii. Building partnerships**

The District will

- support and seek to develop the work of Churches Together in South Yorkshire, Churches Together in Derbyshire and Churches Together in Nottinghamshire and encourage Churches and Circuits to work ecumenically
- work for the implementation of the Anglican/Methodist Covenant
- support and seek to develop the work of Churches Regional Commissions in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the East Midlands
- support the work of chaplaincies
- encourage dialogue, friendship and partnership with people from other faith communities, including supporting the work of the Sheffield Faiths Forum and Regional Faiths Forum
- participate in both the ecumenical Regional Training Partnership and the regional Methodist training Forum for Yorkshire and the North East
- support Sheffield as a City of Sanctuary
- seek to develop partnerships within the worldwide church.

*The Bridge charity shop in Stocksbridge (Sheffield North Circuit) is managed and staffed by volunteers from all the participant churches of Churches Together in Stocksbridge and District. Families and individuals find good quality nearly new clothes and other items at affordable prices. The money raised is used annually to make grants to non-church volunteer community groups to support their activities.*

### **viii. Making best use of personnel resources**

The District will

- appoint a Lay Stationing Representative, a Property Secretary and a Grants Officer
- appoint other officers and groups to help it carry through its priorities
- employ administrative staff, a Mission and Development Enabler, an Evangelism Enabler; and will work closely with the Regional Training Officers
- work in accordance with its Equalities and Diversity Policy.

*New ways of working will continue to be on the agenda for many circuits in the future. The Rev Colin Barrick already finds himself breaking new ground in this area as he splits his time 75/25 between the Worksop & Kiveton and Bolsover & Staveley Circuits. Geographically it makes good sense with Clowne, Barborough, Creswell & Whitwell being in close proximity with additional responsibility at Harthill and Wales Kiveton. More circuits may have to look at dissolving boundaries in the future, which can work well with good local leadership.*

*The Peak Circuit has a number of retired professionals who offer their skills and experience to advise churches on matters which they may not have the expertise to deal with. These include a Safeguarding Advisor, a Health and Safety Advisor and one who assists with legal issues relating to property. The circuit intends extending this to assisting churches in the completion of schedules (accounts and property forms), grant applications and other issues which arise (such as Surface Water Drainage Charges).*

**5. Criteria which the District will use when drawing up stationing priorities, assessing property schemes and considering grant applications.**

**a. Stationing**

Each year, the appointments to be filled will be scored and ranked using the following chart. The scoring and ranking will be carried out in a process involving the Circuits concerned, the District Lay Stationing Representative and the District Chair, where a score of 1 is low and 10 is high.

<b>Criterion:</b> The Circuit has shown	Scoring	Justification
1. that it has clear and specific plans for mission which will be carried forward by this appointment in ways which are clearly described.		
2. the extent to which this appointment involves special work, new initiatives, continuing recent initiatives, responding to exceptional pastoral situations.		
3. how heavy a burden a vacancy would leave for other staff, including probationers, recent ordinands and new superintendents; and in view of health issues, travelling distances, number of churches and members, and other commitments e.g. chaplaincies.		
4. how far there are special factors that ought to be taken into consideration: e.g. demographic, social, economic (treating rural and urban needs as equally significant).		

In addition, an appointment will be given 2 extra points if the Circuit has carried a vacancy during the previous year. In the case of a Circuit with two vacancies, 4 points will be added to one of those appointments. If there are further vacancies in the same Circuits, 2 points may be added to each of those vacancies. The Circuit needs to decide to which appointment those points will be added, but the choice should reflect the scoring under 1 to 4 above.

## **b. Property Consents**

Churches and Circuits must show, in every case:

1. that they have clear and specific plans for mission (under at least one of the 'Our Calling' headings) that will be carried forward if this scheme is implemented
2. and that the design will achieve these plans.
3. that the possibility of partnership with ecumenical or other community organisations has been fully explored.
4. if there other factors to be taken into consideration e.g. demographic, social, and economic, in developing the scheme
5. if the scheme enables the development of on-going existing work that is critical to the mission of the circuit or of the District.
6. that the scheme is financially realistic, given membership and other relevant factors.

## **c. Grant Applications**

The District applies various criteria to applications for District Grants. Circuits and Churches must show:

1. that they have clear and specific plans for mission (under at least one of the 'Our Calling' headings) that will be carried forward if this scheme is implemented.
2. that the scheme will achieve these plans.
3. if the scheme enables the development of on-going existing work that is critical to the mission of the circuit or of the District.
4. that the proposal enables change and takes measured risks.
5. that the possibility of partnership with ecumenical or other community organisations has been fully explored.
6. if there are other factors to be taken into consideration e.g. demographic, social, and economic, in developing the scheme?
7. that the scheme is financially realistic, given membership and other relevant factors.

## **Additional Notes:**

1. Sustaining the work of the circuit on a self-financing basis is normally expected to be a circuit objective. Therefore DAF grants will not normally support the replacement of current circuit personnel even where the job description is different.
2. Applications for increases in previous grant levels will normally only be considered where there is an increase in the work to be funded.
3. The Church/Circuit's willingness and ability to share in the cost will be taken into consideration (bearing in mind any special factors) when assessing the scale of the grant.
4. An accurate budget of income and expenditure for the year(s) in question is required. For specific appointments/projects a particular budget will be required, as well as details of circuit/church finances where it is within a circuit (including church appointments and projects).
5. Term grant applications are normally expected to be on a diminishing basis.
6. The setting of circuit/church aims and objectives, and a process of monitoring and evaluation are required. In cases where grant aid is offered for three years or more, a report following the process of monitoring and evaluation will be a condition of the continuance of grant payments (in consultation with the church and circuit).
7. Grants for new appointments are not normally awarded where the contract of employment has already been entered into (ie: no retrospective applications will normally be considered).
8. Grants for building works will not normally be given where building works have already commenced before approval of the scheme and grant.
9. Circuits and Churches are asked to show what implications would refusal of this application have?
10. Property grants will normally be in the region of 10% of new locally raised funds



