

The Darlington Methodist District assess employment terms and conditions for employees using methods that include the benchmarking of faith and charity roles in other organisations and, as necessary, by applying guidance received direct from the Methodist Church.

In matters of lay employment, our intention is to protect the financial and reputational interests of the Circuits, Churches, and projects across the District.

Supplementary information is available from the Lay Employment Resource pack on the Methodist Church website: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/employees-and-volunteers/>

This document contains recommendations, data, and good practice to support decision making and to facilitate meaningful conversation, whilst respecting that the application of most of these recommendations' ultimately rests with the individual employing body.

Section	Procedure	Page
1	Hours of Work	1
2	Working Time Directive	1
3	The Living Wage Policy	1, 2
4	Probationary Period	2
5	Sick Pay	2, 3
6	Line Management & Supervision	3
7	Appraisals	3
8	Job Descriptions	3, 4
9	Notice Period	4
10	Annual Leave Entitlement	4, 5
11	Auto Enrolment	5, 6
12	Fixed Term Contracts	6, 7
13	Scrutiny/Approval for Roles	7

## 1. Hours of Work

The standard working week for a full-time Employee is recommended to be 40-hours.

## 2. Working Time Directive

Employers have a duty under the Working Time Directive 1998 to ensure Employees do not **normally** work more than forty-eight hours in any one week.

It is suggested and it has been tested in court that **normally** should be calculated and referenced over a period of 17-weeks. There are certain jobs where this rule is not enforceable however there are no jobs within the Church that fall into this category. This rule includes roles where Employers are not the Employees only Employer. In any such circumstances the Employer must collaborate with the Employee to ensure these averaged hours do not exceed 48.

## 3. The Living Wage Policy

The Methodist Church is a real living wage employer.

It is therefore a requirement that the living wage, as detailed and published by the Living Wage Foundation, forms the minimum basic salary for Employees within the Darlington Methodist District. This includes people under the age of 18.

The new living wage rate was announced in October 2024. As soon as an Employer is able, and no later than April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, they should ensure that £12.60 per hour is paid as a minimum to all Employees.

More information about the Living Wage Foundation can be found by visiting their website at [www.livingwage.org.uk](http://www.livingwage.org.uk)

#### **4. Probationary Periods**

In setting a probationary period the Employer confirms to a newly recruited Employee that their performance will be under review during the first weeks and months of employment, and that an Employee's continued employment remains subject to satisfactorily completing probation.

It should be remembered that new Employees also treat the probationary period as a period for deciding whether the job is also suitable for them.

The length of the probationary period will depend on the job role and on the requirements of the Employer, but it will typically be 6 months, with the potential to be extended if, for example, the Employee's performance is not satisfactory. *There is no law that governs the length of a period of probation but there is always an expectation that the Employer acts reasonably.*

Even though a probationary period has no legal status the written statement of terms and conditions of employment must now detail the probationary period, specifying its length, and explain how progress will be monitored and what any subsequent decisions will be based on, including performance, behaviour, conduct and capability.

The Line Manager will normally be responsible for monitoring the progress of a new Employee during this period and a performance review meeting should be arranged before the end of the probationary period to assess if an Employee has passed, failed or if there is a need to extend.

#### **5. Sick Pay**

Sick pay is recommended to include an enhanced provision for Employees, above the statutory provision. There are two recommendations from which you can choose:

##### Option 1

- Between 6-months and 1-years' service      1-months full pay
- Between 1- and 2-years' service              2-months full and 2-months half pay
- Between 2- and 10-years' service            4-months full and 4-months half pay
- More than 10-years' service                  6-months full and 6-months half pay

##### Option 2

- If you are absent from work by reason of ill health you will be entitled to receive occupational sick pay, less any statutory sick pay entitlement, during any period of sickness up-to a total of 15-days.

Staff who work part-time will receive sick pay on a pro-rata basis.

An Employee who is absent from work by reason of ill-health is recommended to receive enhanced sick pay, less any statutory sick pay (SSP) entitlement, for the periods summarised above. The period should be considered in terms of a rolling year.

If an Employer believes that they may be faced with a potential long-term Employee absence, or if the Employer currently has an Employee absent from work for a continuous period of more than 4-weeks, it is recommended that support is requested from the District Lay Employment Advisor.

For information around measuring absence, fit notes, linked periods of absence, and for general guidance and support on how to manage both short- and long-term absences, and to appreciate the types of reasonable adjustments that can be made to support employees with disabilities or health conditions, it is recommended to contact the District Lay Employment Advisor.

## 6. Line Management & Supervision

It is a requirement that a suitable Line Manager is identified before any new Employee takes up post and that Line Managers complete Methodist Line Management training at the earliest opportunity.

- Training is delivered via the Learning Network: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/learning-and-development/about-the-learning-network/>

The Methodist Line Manager Handbook (updated and issued in 2024) can be accessed here: [https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Line\\_Managers\\_Handbook\\_2024.pdf](https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Line_Managers_Handbook_2024.pdf)

Frequent line management meetings are an important part of monitoring progression whilst offering a valuable platform for the Employee to express how they feel. It is recommended that line managers spend time preparing an agenda and considering discussion points in advance of each line management meeting, so that the conversation remains focused.

It is now a requirement that in addition to line management roles with a pastoral element are provided reflective supervision: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/equipping-circuits/offices-and-roles/local-lay-pastors/line-management-and-reflective-supervision/>

## 7. Appraisals

Effective Employee appraisals remain key to a successful employment relationship.

As the Line Manager is the representative of the Employer there is encouragement to plan for and undertake an annual appraisal. Guidance is available from the District Lay Employment Advisor.

## 8. Job Descriptions

When an Employee begins work it is important that they are issued a job description that accurately reflects the tasks and responsibilities of the job that they have been employed to do. *This document will help to manage expectations between Employer and Employee.* Guidance is available from the District Lay Employment Advisor.

It should be remembered that job roles evolve and so the duties and tasks in the job description will

change. Working collaboratively with the Employee the job description should form a part of the appraisal process to allow amendments to be agreed and applied in an appropriate setting.

## 9. Notice Periods

During the period of probation, a standard period of 1 week's notice should apply.

Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, a period of notice of 1 (calendar) month should be applied. *It is recommended that this applies to both the Employee and the Employer.*

Depending on the responsibilities of a role it may be appropriate to apply a longer notice period. If this might be a consideration, guidance is available from the District Lay Employment Advisor.

Should an Employer be considering *giving notice* to an Employee there are different confirmations that the Methodist Church require to be followed before any action is taken.

It is a requirement of the Methodist Church that approval is sought and received from the District Lay Employment Advisor before any decision is made, or action is taken. (CPD 438A)

## 10. Annual Leave Entitlement

Annual leave entitlement is recommended to be 33-days per annum or 264 hours, inclusive of public holidays, for a full-time employee based on a 40-hour working week. *A part-time Employees annual leave is calculated pro-rata to this.* Annual leave entitlement can be noted in either days or hours in the Employee's contract.

Example of calculating a part-time employee's annual leave entitlement, based on the number of fixed days that the part-time employee works:



Examples of calculating annual leave entitlement for part-time workers based on the number of days an employee works each week, assuming the full time equivalent entitlement is 33-days, including public holidays

<b>1</b>	<b>DAY A WEEK</b>	6.6 days (6.6 x 1 = 6.6)
<b>1.5</b>	<b>DAYS A WEEK</b>	9.9 days (6.6 x 1.5 = 9.9)
<b>2</b>	<b>DAYS A WEEK</b>	13.2 days (6.6 x 2 = 13.2)
<b>3</b>	<b>DAYS A WEEK</b>	19.8 days (6.6 x 3 = 19.8)
<b>4</b>	<b>DAYS A WEEK</b>	26.4 days (6.6 x 4 = 26.4)

Example of calculating a part-time employee's annual leave entitlement, based on the number of hours that the part-time employee works each week over irregular days:



Examples of calculating annual leave entitlement for part-time workers based on the number of hours an employee works each week, assuming the full time equivalent entitlement is 264 hours, including public holidays

<b>5 HOURS A WEEK</b>	33-hours annual leave
<b>12 HOURS A WEEK</b>	79.2 hours annual leave
<b>20 HOURS A WEEK</b>	132 hours annual leave
<b>25 HOURS A WEEK</b>	165 hours annual leave
<b>30 HOURS A WEEK</b>	198 hours annual leave

When calculating leave where an Employee joins or leaves employment part-way through a year, or where an Employee does not work fixed days per week or fixed hours per day, or when you are managing a term time only or an annualised hours contract of employment it is recommended that support is requested from the District Lay Employment Advisor.

Alternatively, the gov.uk website offers a functional and free to use calculator for such scenarios: <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-holiday-entitlement>

## 11. Auto Enrolment

Auto enrolment remains a continuous responsibility for an Employer, and it is an area that cannot be ignored and therefore it should be researched and understood.

What an Employer needs to do will depend on whether the Employee is classified under the appropriate legislation as a worker. There are different categories of workers, determined by factors such as age and how much they earn.

Changes in an Employee's age and earnings may see them move between the different categories of worker which, in turn, would see Employer duties change for that Employee.

For this reason, it is important to put in place procedures to monitor age and earnings. These don't have to be complicated or over thought – sometimes the simplest processes are the best.

There are other added responsibilities to auto enrolment which include but are not exhaustive to managing requests to join or leave the scheme, re-enrolment every 3 years of Employees that have left the scheme, and the necessity to keep records during and after employment.



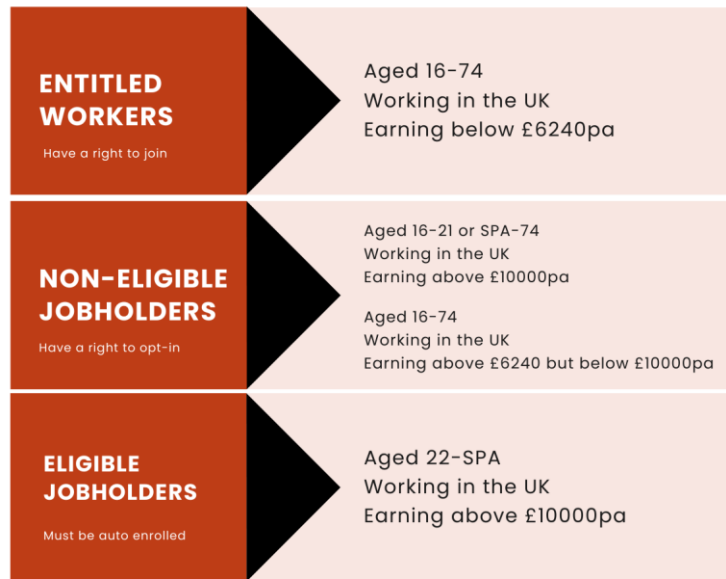
Auto enrolment:  
The different types of worker.

**KEY**

**£6240:** Lower earnings level for qualifying earnings

**£10000:** Earnings trigger for auto enrolment

**SPA:** State pension age



The Methodist Conference of 2017 passed a resolution requiring employing bodies to offer different levels of pension contribution, from 01 September 2017, as follows:

- the Employer level for pension contribution remains as a minimum 6% of salary.
- Employees should be offered choices, with a minimum level of contribution from them of 2%, to apply to all employees appointed after 1 September 2017.
- Employers should offer any Employees that have opted out of contributions at 6% the chance to now be enrolled at a level between 2% and 6%.
- Employers should not be allowed to offer these new arrangements to existing employees that are already contributing at the current level of 6%.

More information about auto enrolment can be found by visiting the Pension Regulator website at <https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers>

Note: It is not uncommon within the Church for multiple employment contracts to exist for one Employee and in these circumstances additional assessment will be necessary to establish if they are separate contracts or if they should be treated as a single employment relationship.

## 12. Fixed Term Contracts

Guidance and legislation around fixed term contracts (FTCs) is fluid.

Employees are accepted to be on an FTC if they have an employment contract with their Employer and the employment contract states a particular day that it will end, or references that it will terminate on completion of a specific task, or project.

Employers must ensure that Employees on an FTC get the same pay and conditions as permanent staff, the same, or equivalent, benefits package as others, and that they are informed about where permanent vacancies within the business can be accessed.

FTCs will end automatically when the agreed and stipulated end date is reached. The Employer does not have to give any notice of this to the Employee however it is good practice for an Employer to

confirm their intentions in advance of the end date.

An Employee that works **successive** FTCs for 4 or more years will achieve permanent employment status automatically, *unless the Employer can show a good business reason not to do so.*

For example:

- If an Employee completes a 3-year FTC, and is offered a 2-year extension, again via a FTC, they will achieve permanent status on the 4th year as **successive** FTCs have been used.
- If an Employee works under a single 5-year FTC, they will not achieve permanent status on the 4<sup>th</sup> year however any extension given after completion of the initial 5-year FTC will mean the Employee achieves permanent status.

### **13. Scrutiny/Approval Process for Roles**

The Methodist Church has an established process for recruitment and the creation and validation of new roles. Note that no vacancy may be advertised and no appointment made unless approval has been obtained from the District Lay Employment Advisor acting on behalf and under the authority of the District Leadership Team (CPD 438A (5).)