



Methodist South-East District Memorial to the Conference of 2017

The South East District Synod Representative Session (Present : XX, Voting : XX for, XX against) asks the Conference to review the current stationing process for presbyters.

South East District is grateful for efforts of the Methodist Church to provide opportunities for healing and reconciliation through the Complaints Procedure. While the SE District is grateful for the efforts of the Connexional Complaints team to address difficult and complex issues, the actual experience of working through several Complaints at the circuit and district level over the past year have prompted us to request the Methodist Council to review the Complaints Procedure with the following concerns included:

- The current Complaints system puts an inordinate amount of work on the Local Complaints Officer (usually the Circuit Superintendent). The decisions arrived at for many circuit level complaints are often appealed to a higher level primarily because the Complainants disagrees with the decision reached. Complaints that go to the Connexional level are usually only rehashed; new information is rarely received. This devalues the circuit's original contribution.
- The time frame for the current process can stretch over a year, which adds considerably to the stress for all concerned. The only time limit specified is that for making an appeal to a decision. Long periods can elapse before the Complainant or Respondent is informed of decisions. A recognisable time limit for all levels should be established including when responses can be expected, with a clearly specified procedure for obtaining permission to exceed the time limit in unusual cases.
- The published flowchart for the complaints needs additional clarity for showing how complaints are to be handled, specifically in the relationship between various options for the Connexional Complaints Panel to consider.
- The communication between the Connexional Complaints Panel and those involved with the complaint has been less than satisfactory with information being left on answerphones or relayed in emails.

Proposed: Rev Sonia Hicks
Superintendent, Thames Valley Circuit

Seconded: Rev Bonni-Belle Pickard
Superintendents, North Kent Circuit