

THE SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT CO-SUPERINTENDENCY September 2019

This paper gives the background, rationale and the future for Co-Superintendency in the Sheffield Circuit.

The Sheffield Circuit exists to support and enable the work of the churches in the Circuit, 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 Circuit also has a role in relation to the City and issues of concern in public life across the City.

BACKGROUND

The Circuit was formed in September 2013 by the amalgamation of eight former circuits serving the Metropolitan District of Sheffield and some adjacent areas in Derbyshire. The 'regrouping for mission' process that led to this had involved the former circuits in a great deal of reflection and discernment which included a realisation that resources (financial and human) needed to be shared across the city. It was decided that this was only possible by forming one large circuit which at the time of formation, encompassed some 2,750 members, 22 staff and over 60 places of worship. The circuit resolved from inception that with God's guidance, the Methodist people in Sheffield Circuit would be doing things differently, responding to God's challenge, call and mission; working collaboratively to grow disciples and help build the Kingdom.

LEADERSHIP IN THE CIRCUIT

Since the outset, it has been clear that some of the traditional models of leadership, based on smaller geographical areas, could not apply to a very large circuit. The vital partnership of lay and ordained leaders has been at the centre of our planning. Inevitably, models have grown and developed as lay and ordained people have started to work together, as trust and understanding has built. In 2016, a new structure was introduced that created a number of work groups involving a range of people who can offer appropriate skills; a Circuit Leadership Team with Circuit Steward, Staff and Superintendency representation steers policy and relates closely to quarterly Circuit Meetings. A parallel Mission Vision Team with similar representation alongside other lay people has oversight of church reviews, missional projects and dreams.

SUPERINTENDENCY

In keeping with the vision of 'doing things differently', in response to the needs of Sheffield, a Co Superintendency model has been in existence since 2013. Several models were considered - including one with a 'detached' Superintendent, and another with lead and some assistant Superintendents. After reflection it was felt that these models did not fit the Circuit's vision of collaborative leadership. Neither was it seen as helpful or appropriate to have a number of Superintendents who had responsibility for a geographical section of the circuit.

As with other patterns of leadership, the Co Superintendency model has developed over the years. With the help of an external facilitator/critical friend the current members of the Co Superintendency offer the Circuit a model which, it is hoped, will be sustainable as and when personnel change.

THE SHEFFIELD CO SUPERINTENDENCY MODEL

The key features of the model of Superintendency for Sheffield are:

There should be at least three Co Superintendents, preferably four.

Together, the Co Superintendents hold the responsibilities as outlined in CPD

Each Co Superintendent will hold a 'portfolio' based one aspect of the overall mission-focused responsibilities, according to the gifts and graces that s/he brings to the role

The Co Superintendency will operate as a 'Community'. This means that (for example)

- Membership can be fluid
- Working together, the Co Superintendency comes to a mind on matters that require decisions and contributions (as per CPD)
- The Co Superintendency can be represented by one or more individual members attending any meeting or fulfilling any role
- As a Community, the Co Superintendency will meet together for reflection, worship and renewal
- Meetings of the Co Superintendency do not of themselves operate as an executive decision-making body but bring together the breadth of experience required to contribute to decision making at appropriate places within Circuit structures
- Those seeking to be stationed as members of the Co Superintendency (either through Connexional processes or from within the Circuit) will first and foremost be committed to participating in collaborative leadership within the Community. Secondly, they will contribute skills and expertise to a particular portfolio as is appropriate.

The Co Superintendency Community is based on mutual trust and accountability and therefore does not recognise the role of a 'Lead Superintendent.' Each member of the Community will take the lead in those areas for which s/he has particular responsibility.

DEVELOPING THE CO-SUPERINTENDENCY – 2019 AND BEYOND

We anticipate that September 2020 this will be an opportunity to see a new team formed; rather than fitting in new Co Superintendents into existing roles, we shall look forward to discerning together and with Circuit Leadership, how experience, gifts and skills can be used to further God's mission in a diverse circuit that presents significant opportunities for mission, development and partnership.

This paper has deliberately refrained from outlining the way that the overall responsibility for superintendency is distributed amongst members of the team. This is because the circuit feels that a willingness to offer skills, experience and vision within a collegial team-based superintendency is by far the most significant aspect of any profile. The circuit also recognises that with a supportive team or community of three/four, there is opportunity for those who have established experience of superintendency but an openness to doing things differently as well as those who might wish to explore the joys of the role for the first time, and relish the opportunity of doing this within the context of a supportive team.

We are very happy discuss this if you have any questions arising from this.

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