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District Redundancy Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

**IN ANY REDUNDANCY SITUATION THE DISTRICT LAY EMPLOYMENT ADVISOR MUST BE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY COMMUNICATION IS MADE TO AN EMPLOYEE**

**METHODIST EMPLOYERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS FOR ANY REASON WITHOUT HAVING FIRST OBTAINED PERMISSION FROM THE DISTRICT LAY EMPLOYMENT ADVISOR   
(Methodist Standing Order 438A)**

This policy sets out the District’s approach to dealing with potential redundancies amongst district, circuit or church employees. It does not form part of employees’ terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of the Lay Employment Sub-Committee management group.

Although the District’s policy is to avoid redundancies wherever possible, the needs of our churches and circuits may from time to time require a reduction in the overall number of staff employed, or organisational changes that result in some roles being made redundant.

Where this is necessary, the employer should ensure that:

* the total number of redundancies made is kept to a minimum;
* employees and, where appropriate, their representatives are fully consulted on any proposals and their implementation;
* selection for redundancy is based on clear criteria that will be objectively and fairly applied;
* every effort is made to redeploy or find alternative work for employees in roles which are selected for redundancy; and
* support and advice are provided to employees in roles selected for redundancy to help them find suitable work when their employment has come to an end.

Questions for local church /circuit trustees to consider

Following on from the general principles outlined above, these are some specific questions that local church / circuit trustees should actively consider before moving to a redundancy situation:

* Has the decision been made by the church council/ circuit meeting or a sub-committee to which the church council/ circuit meeting has given formally minuted delegated authority to make such decisions?
* Has possible redundancy been discussed with the Circuit Leadership Team (for both church and circuit roles)?
* If redundancy is proposed on grounds of unaffordability:
  + what efforts have been made to source alternative funding, including but not limited to, seeking external grants, requesting increased congregational giving, asking other Methodist organisations within the circuit for financial support, reducing non-payroll costs, sale of surplus assets?
  + If lockdown regulations do not change from their current position and redundancies are not made, when will the church/ circuit run out of cash?
* Will the activities currently undertaken by paid staff continue after redundancy of this role? If so, how?
* If the proposed redundancy is due to the project having been ineffective, has a project evaluation been performed? (please provide a copy/ explanation)
* Have alternative duties staff could undertake been considered?
* Is redundancy part of a credible, articulated and agreed strategic plan for the church/ circuit: either a plan for growth or a managed closure? (please provide a copy of this plan)

Answers to the questions above should be provided to the District Lay Employment Advisor before proceeding

The Line Manager of the employee should be the main point of contact throughout the process. The Lay Employee should also be given access to an independent (independent of the process) person who could offer pastoral support.

Care should be taken to communicate appropriately with those affected by the proposed redundancy and to consider the impact on their work. Particular care is needed where potential changes in employed staff roles may be a possible outcome of a wide consultative discernment process regarding future mission priorities.

Consultation

**Option 1 - where there are no employee representatives**

Consultations will be carried out with individual employees as appropriate. Where more than 20 redundancies are proposed, please talk to the Lay Employment Advisor for further information

**Option 2 - where employees are covered by trade union recognition**

Appropriate consultations will be carried out with the [name of union] in respect of any redundancy proposals. Individual employees will also be consulted in respect of their own particular circumstances.

**Option 3 - where there are existing employee representatives**

Consultations will be carried out with individual employees as appropriate. Where more than 20 redundancies are proposed, please talk to the Lay Employment Advisor for further information. Where it is proposed that 20 or more redundancies are required at the same location over a 90-day period, consultations will take place with the [name of employee forum] over the proposals and the general process to be followed. Individual employees will still be consulted in respect of their own particular circumstances.

Voluntary redundancy

In order to minimise the need for compulsory redundancies, the employer may consider requests from employees for voluntary redundancies. Whether or not additional payments will be offered in relation to voluntary redundancies will be a matter for consultation and will depend on the circumstances.

The employer reserves the right at its absolute discretion to decline requests for voluntary redundancy.

Redundancy selection

The criteria used in selecting employees for redundancy will depend on the existing circumstances and the particular needs of the employer at the time. However, a fair and robust set of criteria will be devised following appropriate consultations.

Individual employees who are provisionally selected for redundancy following the application of the criteria will be informed of the fact and invited to a meeting, at which they will be given an opportunity to discuss the criteria and make suggestions for an alternative course of action.

Alternative work

The employer will make every effort to redeploy to suitable alternative work any employee who is selected for redundancy. Such employees will be informed of all the available vacancies in the organisation at the time of their selection and will be given an opportunity to discuss with their line manager which vacancies are likely to be suitable for them. While priority will be given wherever possible to employees under threat of redundancy, the employer reserves the right to select the best available candidate in relation to any given vacancy.

Employees have a separate legal entitlement to be offered any suitable alternative work that is available if they are made redundant while on maternity leave.

Time off work

An employee under notice of redundancy will be entitled to a reasonable amount of paid time off to look for alternative work, attend interviews, etc.   
Employees wishing to take advantage of this right should make the appropriate arrangements with their line manager.

Termination of employment

Depending on the circumstances, the employer may waive its right to insist on employees working their notice and instead give a payment in lieu of notice. Employees with two or more years’ service may be entitled to a statutory redundancy payment. The amount of this payment will be confirmed when the employee is selected for redundancy and the sum will be paid along with the employee’s final salary payment or payment in lieu of notice

*Version 1, July 2020*