

Investors in People Standard

- 1 The Organisation is committed to supporting the development of its people**
 - a) The Circuit Leadership Team meets to decide strategy and consider what support is required. It meets 2 or 3 times per year.
 - b) It reports to the Circuit Meeting 2 or 3 times per year.
 - c) The Circuit Local Preachers have their own support group which meets quarterly. There are annual support meetings for property/finance stewards. We have just introduced an annual support meeting for church stewards and are introducing one for pastoral visitors. A support meeting for the people who take part in 'readings' services will take place shortly. ('Readings' are supplied for people to use when we cannot find enough preachers to lead all our church services.)
 - d) There is an email list to which all offers of help/support are circulated. It is backed up by letters to those churches/officeholders not on email.
 - e) It is backed up by a website from which people can print off useful information and circulate it to church members.
- 2 People are encouraged to improve their own and other people's performance**
 - a) The Minister has never been expected to do everything in Methodist Churches.
 - b) Conscious that staffing levels for the future are under review, the Circuit is encouraging its members and officers to improve their own and other people's performance. People generally work together in small teams rather than by themselves, though this is not true for church treasurers and sometimes teams have not been as supportive of their individual members as they might have been. However, people will generally support one another where one person is perceived to have a skills/experience deficit. For instance, the church treasurer from one church volunteered to help a less experienced colleague to fill in some financial returns for the first time.
- 3 People believe their contribution to the organisation is recognised.**

Feedback is generally gathered anecdotally, although we used a questionnaire to collect people's opinions at the beginning of the Vision into Reality process. Some people believed their contribution is recognised and appreciated, some did not. It varied between different roles and different churches. This is an area we are working on. At a recent leadership team meeting most people said their contribution was recognised and appreciated but a minority still disagreed.
- 4 The organisation is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in the development of its people.**

The Circuit staff in particular are very aware of the need to draw out people's hidden skills and qualities, and to enable people to build their capacity and try new things or play a part in decision making at a new level. Many do not have formal qualifications and are hesitant about undertaking leadership roles. People are not pushed to go beyond the level at which they feel comfortable, but they are encouraged to stretch themselves. There are anecdotal examples but people are not always self-aware about the ways they have grown and developed.

Investors in People Standard

5 The organisation has a plan with clear aims and objectives which are understood by everyone.

An action plan has been evolving and is attached. Everyone should be aware that we are trying to build up and encourage the skills and contribution of all our members, and officers are using 'Vision into Reality' as a tool to achieve this. Most people should be aware of - and be able to identify - some key issues facing the Circuit: pressure to downsize, falling membership, work/life balance, adapting to change. They should also be able to identify at least some of our priorities.

6 Development of people is in line with the organisation's aims and objectives.

We have a lot of training and support in progress. Some people may complain that we have been over enthusiastic. We are trying to provide an equal amount of support to different teams of volunteers - stewards, property stewards, treasurers, pastoral visitors, etc - but work is more advanced with some teams and some people are in more than one team, so we have to avoid the danger of overloading them with development opportunities!

7 People understand how they contribute to achieving the organisation's aims and objectives.

Many people within the Circuit structure are there primarily to derive support for their role in the local church, rather than to achieve the Circuit's aims and objectives. It is only the staff, Circuit stewards and Circuit officers who have a direct responsibility for achieving the Circuit's aims and objectives, through members of the Circuit leadership team and Circuit meeting monitor and help to set those goals. As the Circuit ultimately exists to support and enable the work of local church members, its goals are ultimately intended to meet those aims, though its aims and objectives tend to be strategic and many ordinary members may not be very aware of strategy.

8 Managers are effective in supporting the development of people.

The Circuit Stewards and members of staff are the key 'managers' in the Circuit, but they are supported and assisted by the Circuit Leadership Team. There is a culture of managers supporting one another. Also, the way staff and Circuit stewards are themselves supported is not solely dependent on the Circuit. The district provides some support, and the Methodist 'Connexion' also offers support and training.

9 People learn and develop effectively.

Special effort has been devoted to improving and encouraging learning and development, at training events and through on the job training. External qualifications have been awarded to children's workers, lay preachers and people involved in food preparation. Time has been devoted to helping property stewards carry out a Health & Safety assessment. We are just beginning to develop the idea of collecting feedback from changing through distributing monitoring forms, but this is a new idea and people are a little resistant to using too many management tools in an organisation which has traditionally been touchy-feely.

Investors in People Standard

10 The development of people improved the performance of the organisation, teams and individuals.

We hope the impact will be apparent from anecdotal evidence at all levels. The Circuit has coped well with a reduction from 5 members of staff to 3, (so well that people often have to be reminded it has happened!) More people are aware and focussed on the issues facing the Circuit and their role in addressing them.

11 People understand the impact of the development of people on the performance of the organisation, teams and individuals. [see above]

12 The organisation gets better at developing its people.

Given the reduced resources at its disposal, the Circuit is performing more effectively. There has been a vast increase in the level of help and support being offered – especially since the beginning of the Vision into Reality process.