

## Chapter 6 The Circuit NPNP Discernment Team<sup>1</sup>

Depending on context, a circuit may decide to form one team to fulfil all the functions below, divide the work between two or more teams, or create working parties for specific tasks. Different models will work for different contexts (there may also be one team across more than one circuit, or the District NPNP Team may be made available to the local circuits). However, for ease of reference, we will refer to the 'circuit NPNP team' throughout this resource.

### The functions of the circuit NPNP team are:

1. To initiate the circuit-based NPNP community(s), by discerning a context, vision and focus and playing a role in claiming seed funding (see Chapter 19) and leading on any necessary recruitment.
2. To create a culture of pioneering within the circuit that inspires the starting of NPNPs. In particular:
  - a. To act as advocates for the values (see chapters 1 and 2) of the Methodist Church in relation to pioneering and planting, and to show a preferential bias for CaM.
  - b. To encourage and equip local churches to launch NPNPs.
  - c. To shape, guide and champion the NPNP movement across the circuit.
  - d. To embed NPNP/CaM as a top priority in the circuit mission plan/strategy.
  - e. To model best practice in discernment, prayer and decision-making for pioneering teams to emulate.
3. To oversee and manage the resourcing of circuit-led, or local-church-led NPNPs.

### The circuit NPNP discernment team members

It is important to form this team out of prayer and conversations with people who may feel called to be a part of it and share the values of NPNP/CaM. Some suggested members of the Circuit NPNP team can be found in the table on the following page.

### Ways of working

Remember that the team can work in varied ways, beyond video calls or formal meeting-rooms. Think about where you could gather to inspire creativity, for example in coffee shops, on a walk, by prayer-walking the streets of potential new communities, or by discussing ideas over a meal together.

<sup>1</sup> In some contexts the District NPNP Team may take this role.

## Strategic planning

A crucial role of the circuit NPNP team is to strategically oversee the visioning for local churches to begin an NPNP as part of every church mission plan. This will require analysing the readiness of local churches to begin an NPNP; supporting, encouraging and enabling the emerging vision for the NPNP communities; setting realistic goals for the number of new communities that will begin and keeping a database of new communities and their progress.

Circuit NPNP discernment team members	
<b>The Superintendent</b>	The Superintendent's role is both to support the contexts where new communities are beginning and to enable local churches to imagine what is possible in their communities.
<b>District Mission Enabler (or equivalent)</b>	The Enabler's voice will be key to identifying the places where there is capacity to begin a fruitful project. If the circuit does not have an Enabler, consider involving someone, lay or ordained, who is a recognised leader and is passionate about mission.
<b>Learning Network MPP lead</b>	The Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP) lead brings knowledge of the pioneer community in your area. They can also advocate and share the circuit's NPNP vision with the pioneer community and invite pioneers to integrate their work into that vision.
<b>Planter or pioneer</b>	Someone with first-hand experience of beginning an NPNP. Involving them in shaping the vision helps to avoid unnecessary pitfalls and builds in best practice early on.
<b>Person with financial experience</b>	Someone with experience in budgeting, accounting and/or financial planning, who is not afraid to talk about money as a gift, both in the short-term to begin a project and in the long-term strategic use of resources.
<b>Key influencers and advocates</b>	People with knowledge of circuit structures and the ability to navigate, eg circuit stewards. People who can advocate for the importance of NPNPs in the life and future of the Church.
<b>A person who will model deep trusting faith</b>	A person who will always remind the team in the midst of shaping the vision that it is God's work not ours, be that when it is easy or hard. They will remind everyone to keep praying and to listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings.
<b>An organiser</b>	Every team needs someone who will keep the process on track, collate information and establish the next steps.

## Chapter 7 Pioneer Job/Role Description

### Discerning, appointing or selecting the right pioneer(s) is crucial to success

Your context may need two paid part-time pioneers, one paid full-time pioneer or an unpaid pioneering team. There is a diversity of gifts, core skills and orientations in the pioneering community and not every community is right for every pioneer. When writing your role description, it is important to identify the focus of the role and the skills of the person you are seeking to appoint.

Here are some pointers on the best ways to shape the role description to find the right person:

- Be focused, not general. Let the role description flow from your community vision.
- Enthusiastically share your vision so that potential applicants respond to your passion.
- Be clear about key areas of work (eg forming a new Christian community, leadership).
- Resist the temptation to download a template or copy a document you have seen elsewhere; it won't express the uniqueness of your community.
- Be realistic about expectations. It is easy to list everything you think might be a part of the role, but this could de-prioritise important aspects or make the role too demanding.
- In your description, demonstrate the collaborative nature of the work and the team.
- Appeal to pioneers from diverse backgrounds and educational experience, and with *lived experience of the context* in which the community is based.

### Finding a pioneer(s) with the gifts and skills for your NPNP

We celebrate the diversity of pioneers that God is calling to the Church: some will work in traditional contexts, others in contexts beyond the fringes of existing churches. To help identify a pioneer's natural leanings and relationship to the wider Church, the Church Mission Society has designed the Pioneer Spectrum.<sup>2</sup> The spectrum identifies four different types of pioneers, recognising that each type is naturally inclined to work towards a different outcome.

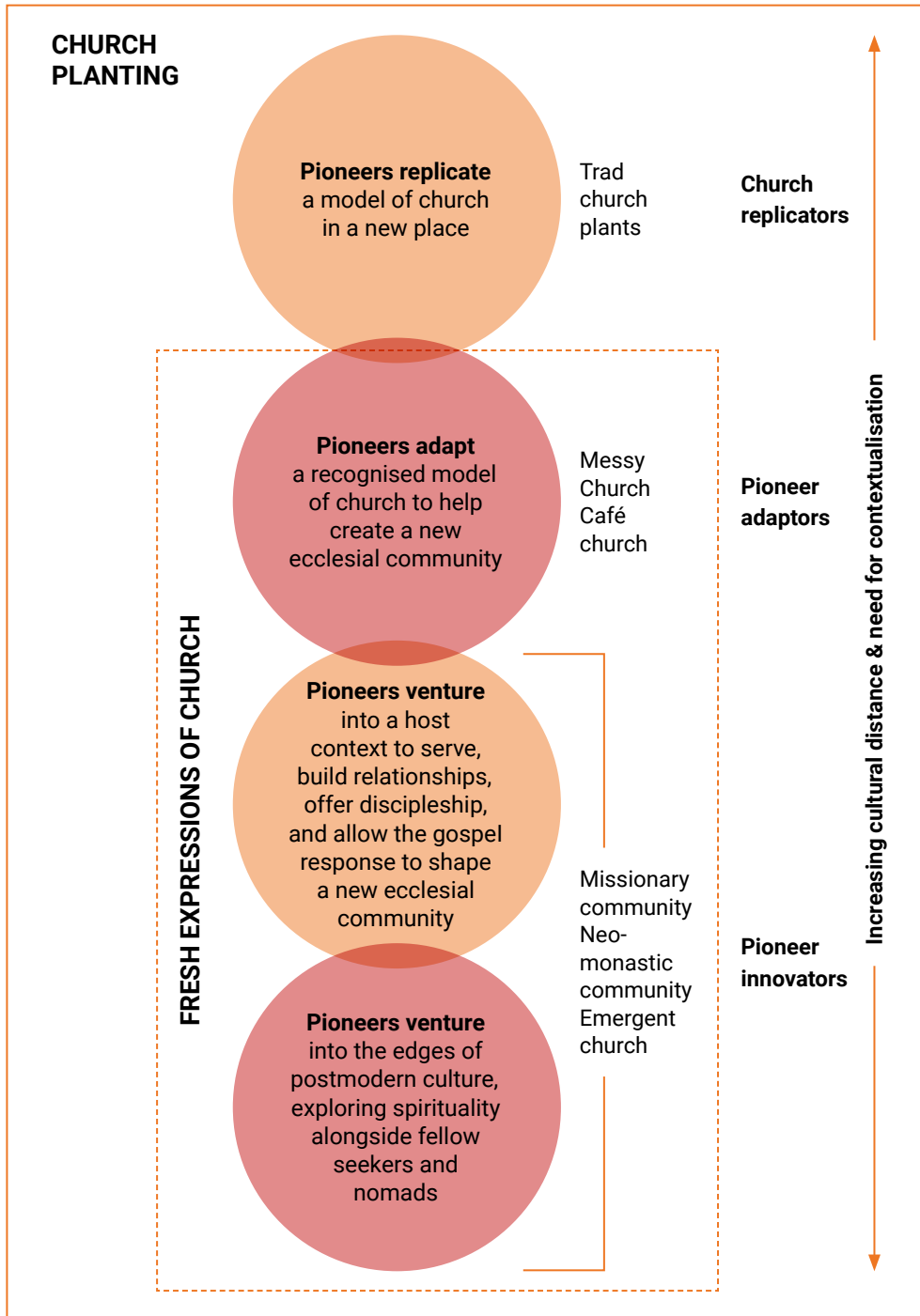
- **Church replicators** are those who will identify a new community and seek to reproduce the same church model as the context they have come from.
- **Pioneer innovators** are leaders who, with their teams, venture beyond the edges of the church's structures to create faithful expressions of Christian community among people of a new context.
- **Pioneer adaptors** have the gift of adapting innovative ideas developed elsewhere into their own contexts.
- **Pioneer activists** are those whose gift and vocation is to shape places in order to align a community, network or industry with the values of the kingdom. They see themselves as missionaries, but without the express intention of planting a church. Please note, while this kind of pioneering is to be celebrated, it would not be suitable for establishing an NPNP community.

If a pioneer is being employed, we suggest all members of the interview panel take time to watch the video ([youtu.be/rwwAc5sTr5M](https://youtu.be/rwwAc5sTr5M)) and look at the diagram below to understand the type of pioneer you are seeking to recruit.

As part of the recruitment process, it may be helpful to ask those shortlisted to use the Pioneer Spectrum cards to discern their pioneer calling in relation to the community: [churchmissionsociety.org/files/pioneer-spectrum-cards](https://churchmissionsociety.org/files/pioneer-spectrum-cards)

<sup>2</sup> We are grateful to Tina Hodgett and Paul Bradbury for this resource and to the Church Mission Society for making it freely available.

### Pioneer Spectrum



**COMMUNITY  
ACTIVISM/  
SOCIAL  
ENTERPRISE**

**Pioneers venture** into secular space to influence it and transform it in the name of Christ.

Kingdom oriented social enterprises

**Pioneer activists**

Section 3: How do I put together a team and recruit staff?

### What kind of pioneer(s) are you seeking?

<b>Self-starter</b>	In a variety of settings, be it church, community, artistic or business, a pioneer is motivated to initiate a new community from very little or nothing.
<b>Visionary</b>	Pioneers are gifted to imagine how Christian community might be for new people and will envision others to work towards its creation.
<b>Team-builder</b>	Effective pioneers build teams of people around a vision.
<b>Connected to others</b>	Creative connections to their community, to God and to individuals is the passion of pioneers
<b>Called to the edge</b>	Though committed to the Church, pioneers often find themselves called to and happiest at the edge.
<b>Natural evangelist</b>	At ease speaking about their faith sensitively in every situation, a pioneer is always open to sharing the gospel in relevant ways.
<b>Committed to diversity</b>	Being called to the edge, a pioneer notices those who are missing or excluded from Christian communities.
<b>Risk-taking and willing to learn</b>	A pioneer has a willingness to take healthy risks and learn in the pursuit of finding out where God is leading.
<b>Responsive to changing contexts</b>	A pioneer is able to pivot quickly to changes around them and turn them into fruitful opportunities for faith to be shared.
<b>Desiring faith community</b>	Essential to pioneers is the desire to form new Christian communities where people can become followers of Jesus for the first time.

## Chapter 8 How to Manage a Pioneer

Good management and oversight of a pioneer (lay or ordained, paid or unpaid) is **essential** for the success of the pioneer and the community. Clarifying how this will be done, and by whom, is an important decision for your team to make **before** the community commences.

### Oversight and support models

<b>Single line manager:</b> Essential for lay and ordained pioneers	Who: Someone who understands the work, has a passion for mission, and has the capacity and skills to manage the pioneer.
	Role: To be part of the circuit NPNP team, ensure the work is carried out, to set goals and targets, to conduct regular meetings and the annual appraisal. <i>The sustained and consistent presence of a <b>good, single line manager</b> for the pioneer is essential for the community to succeed. For lay employees, please consult this advisory pack: <a href="https://methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment">methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment</a></i>
<b>Coach:</b> Essential	Who: A coach will be matched with the pioneer via the Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP).
	Role: To ask great questions, listen well, and help the pioneer determine the steps they should take. Coaches should not be part of line management structures, but we recommend they communicate with those who are. (They will, of course, need the pioneer's permission to communicate and share information with the line manager). For more information, see: <a href="https://methodist.org.uk/Coaching">methodist.org.uk/Coaching</a>
<b>Reflective Supervision:</b> Essential	Who: All ordained and (paid) lay pioneer roles are required to have reflective supervision, coordinated by the Connexional Director of Supervision ( <a href="https://methodist.org.uk/Supervision">methodist.org.uk/Supervision</a> )
	Role: Good supervision helps the supervisee pay attention to their practice including ethical and healthy ways of working. Supervisors should not be part of line management structures.
<b>Management/Oversight group:</b> Essential	Who: People with a range of expertise including mission/financial/communication (ideally a maximum of six people).
	Role: To oversee and manage the key aims and objectives of the community by receiving reports from and meeting with the pioneering team. Responsible for decision-making on key issues and giving overall guidance.
<b>Reference group/Stakeholder forum:</b> As appropriate for context	Who: People with specific knowledge and expertise, including members of other voluntary groups, agencies and ecumenical partners.
	Role: Acts as a 'think tank' to discuss the issues arising from different perspectives.

### Key questions for the team

The following questions may help the team decide how to oversee/manage the pioneer.

- What is the chain of accountability for the pioneer? One example would be: the pioneer is accountable to their line manager, who is accountable to the management group or, circuit/district NPNP team (as appropriate in the local context). The stakeholder forum and the pioneer's coach can feed in their reflections but are not part of the chain of accountability.
- How will the pioneer regularly share updates and report learnings? For example, the pioneer could produce a monthly report on their activities (one-to-ones, new pioneering team members, strategic formation, etc) for the management group.
- Where and how will decisions be made? This might be in different places and with different people, depending on the subject matter.
- Who needs to be involved in review and evaluation?
- How will the voices of people within the new community be included in the management structure?

### Line management responsibilities

The line manager will be responsible for the initial induction of the new pioneer (see Chapter 9). Furthermore the line manager will also be responsible for:

- supporting, directing and challenging the pioneer to perform their best, holding them accountable for the delivery of work to a high standard.
- encouraging the pioneer to respond to new challenges and opportunities, in order to meet the vision and aims for the community.
- offering feedback on individual performance and community progress via fortnightly or monthly meetings and an annual formal appraisal. (We recommend a minimum of fortnightly one-hour meetings for the first three months and monthly one-hour meetings thereafter.)
- ensuring and enabling good communications and collaborative working between all the various individuals, groups and networks involved in the community.
- acting as a 'sounding board' to the pioneer.
- overseeing HR-related functions (such as flexible working, TOIL, annual leave, sick leave, complaints and discipline processes, etc) as necessary.

### Further resources

All line managers of lay employees must attend this line management training, please visit [methodist.org.uk/LeadershipDevelopment](https://methodist.org.uk/LeadershipDevelopment)



## Chapter 9 How to Induct a New Pioneer

Experience shows that an important factor in the flourishing of pioneers and communities is good working relationships with the wider church community and its key leadership. A positive induction period will establish healthy working practices. The following considerations are essential in a well-run induction:

- An environment of welcome encourages the building of trusting and supportive relationships.
- All relevant paperwork is understood and completed.
- Aims of the role and expectations of outcomes are clearly explained, agreed and documented.
- Good lines of communication between key stakeholders are detailed and established.
- The new pioneer is regularly given space to ask questions and express any concerns.

**Before the start** Regular communication before the pioneer begins is an opportunity to get to know one another, enable questions to be answered and issues to be resolved. It is wise to appoint one person, usually the line manager, to be the point of contact.

**At the start** Good communication before the pioneer starts means many questions will already have been addressed and paperwork completed. Avoid assuming knowledge; rather share what may seem to you the most obvious pieces of information. Clarify expectations, roles and day-to-day working practice.

**First day** The first day is an opportunity to welcome a new colleague well. We recommend keeping it spiritual, hold the day in prayer and keep sharing the story of the community. Introduce the wider team.

**The following weeks** Continue to support the pioneer as they orientate themselves in the role. It is particularly important that one-to-ones with key stakeholders are made a priority. Networking with the wider community is also essential, with reassurance given that not everything might go as planned and that's fine, as you want to encourage experimenting and learning.

### Well-being

It is important for line managers to take time to reflect with the pioneer about what helps them to stay well and flourish. Encourage the pioneer to prioritise their well-being by:

- establishing a regular pattern of days off
- accessing pastoral supervision and developing healthy spiritual practices
- nurturing and sustaining a support network beyond the ministry context.
- pursuing interests and passions that bring life.

## Chapter 10 Methodist Pioneering Pathways

The growing number of pioneers in the Church is supported by the Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP). Every pioneer involved in a funded (NPNP) is expected to be a member of the MPP to access its resources and join the network of support. At the heart of MPP is the community of pioneers – diverse in outlook, background, and context; all deeply committed to forming new places that connect new people to the transforming love of God.

### The MPP offers support in the following ways:

**Connecting:** The monthly ‘Third Thursday’ online gatherings, along with communities of practice facilitated by the Learning Network, are an opportunities to connect with pioneers across the Connexion and to share stories and wisdom. Retreats are also offered as a time to be together and deepen an understanding of the pioneer call.

**Calling:** The MPP is there to support those initially discerning a call to become a pioneer and to help them in those first steps. It supports experienced pioneers to deepen their call and develop their leadership potential within their district and the connexional pioneering picture.

**Equipping:** Pioneering, like every call, needs to be nurtured through reflective practice and learning. Every pioneer on the MPP is offered a free place on either the Church Planting Intensive or the Pioneer Ministry Short Course at Cliff College. In subsequent years there is opportunity to apply for funding of other learning and training relevant to their planting context. This could be further study, such as a short course, or practical training to upskill and be better equipped.

For pioneers leading funded NPNPs, the **Church Planting Intensive** is a *required course* designed to give additional support and training to enable NPNPs to have the best opportunity to be fruitful and influence wider cultural change. There is also opportunity for ongoing learning within the MPP via a monthly webinar. This session, gathers the MPP community for an in-depth webinar with a key pioneer/planter, thinker, writer, or practitioner – providing an opportunity to engage with those shaping the national and global pioneer movement.

**Planting:** The MPP offers support to put good practices in place which will give the best opportunity for fruitfulness. Areas include models of good accountability, systems for evaluating fruitfulness, planning for long-term sustainability, and fostering good relationships with the wider Church.

**Coaching:** Most fruitful new ecclesial communities have a culture of coaching their leaders. The MPP pairs every pioneer in an active community with a coach who will help them develop personally as well as make progress in the community they are leading.

**Apply to join Methodist Pioneering Pathways:**

[methodist.org.uk/mpp-apply](https://methodist.org.uk/mpp-apply)

## Chapter 11 Safeguarding

NPNTs and communities will be varied in their approach and contexts. The principles and practices of the Methodist Church safeguarding policy must be followed at all times. The NPNT safeguarding policy should be written in consultation with the District Safeguarding Officer and reviewed annually. The safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance of the Methodist Church have been created in order to:

- **Promote** the well-being of children, young people and adults through a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding, within clearly assigned roles.
- **Prevent** harm through best practice in work with children, young people and adults and the creation of a culture of informed vigilance.
- **Protect** through responding effectively when safeguarding concerns arise.

### Questions to ask yourself

- The following list is not exhaustive and is intended as a starting point for your work on safeguarding in your context.
- Which trustee body holds responsibility for this NPNT in terms of safeguarding, eg district/circuit meeting/church council?
- Who is the designated safeguarding lead for the NPNT? What roles in the NPNT require a DBS check?
- Which roles need to complete Foundation/Advanced safeguarding training?
- What risk assessments for gatherings/activities are required (eg children and young people, gatherings/meetings, health and safety)?
- What policies and procedures are needed for digital communication?
- Are you aware of the impact of abuse, and good practice in responding well to survivors of abuse?
- Do people know how to respond to a safeguarding complaint, and the process for making a referral if necessary?
- Are you aware of the process for managing someone with a safeguarding contract if needed?
- How will you meet the criteria for data protection and GDPR (including use of photography and video recordings)?
- How will you enable the NPNT safeguarding policy to be easily accessible to all participants?
- How are you ensuring safe practice in regard to funding and finances?

### Further resources

Methodist Church safeguarding policies and procedure guidance, as well as templates, are available at [methodist.org.uk/Safeguarding](https://methodist.org.uk/Safeguarding)