

Fitzroy Presbyterian Church
Members in Overseas Ministry
Policy & Guidelines (updated August 2018)

The Mission of Fitzroy

1. 'Mission is everything the church does at its interface with the world.' (David Bosch). Fitzroy has a rich and varied mission that includes; its church services, other activities supported directly or indirectly by the church, and activities supported by members of the Fitzroy community in their various involvements.

2. Part of Fitzroy's mission is a desire to engage with the needs of other parts of the world. Currently, this includes; the work of the One World Group, supporting short term trips/programs, supporting those based in Ireland but engaged with work in other countries, as well as supporting those who have chosen to move and live overseas for a period of time – **Members in Overseas Ministry (MOMs)**.

*(This policy has been drafted for people involved in or considering overseas ministry, but many of the points included would be equally relevant to people ministering in or considering ministering in Ireland and the UK.)

Remit and Application of this Policy

3. This policy addresses how Fitzroy supports its MOMs. MOMs are those who intentionally go to live and work outside Ireland in a missional context. MOMs will usually have been formally recognized by Kirk Session, and may or may not regard themselves as formally 'sent' by the church, and not all will be engaged with a Mission Agency. Short term service, mission trips, etc. of less than three months are not covered by this Policy.

4. The policy will apply to the encouragement, guidance, evaluation, selection and endorsement (or otherwise) of members of the Fitzroy community who express an interest in serving as MOMs, and will also apply to the ongoing support – prayer, financial, practical, pastoral care and accountability – of those in service.

5. The policy will act as a guideline for the support of those MOMs who were already in service before the adoption of the policy.

6. The policy is adopted and implemented by the Kirk Session, and should be reviewed every three years.

Purpose Statement

7. In general, Fitzroy is keen to play its part in bringing light to the nations, by practically supporting appropriate organizations and activities, by educating the Fitzroy community on global issues, and by supporting those serving in missional contexts outside Ireland. Part of this means being willing to encourage and facilitate people from within the church community to serve overseas. Fitzroy recognizes that this represents a cost to the church, of both finance and people, but understands that the church will be enriched by their experiences and by the partnership with organizations and churches in other countries.

8. This desire, while genuine, is constrained by the available resources of finances,

time, energy and people, and must be balanced against the other activities and commitments of the church.

Mission Support Group (MSG)

9. A Mission Support Group (MSG) is appointed by the Kirk Session and acts as an advisory group to Session. Ideally, it will have a small number of people (4–6), including at least one Session member, and at least one person with some overseas experience. It has the following responsibilities;

- To implement this policy;
- To lead in educating and encouraging Fitzroy to consider the needs of the church outside Ireland, including by going;
- To discuss likely issues, possibilities and constraints with those who may have an interest in serving overseas, including those who may be in training with a view to serving overseas;
- To receive formal or informal requests from those seeking Fitzroy's support and/or accreditation for overseas work, and to help the enquirer through the steps of discernment, evaluation, selection, and eventually to make a recommendation to Session as to the suitability of the enquirer for formal 'sending';
- To cooperate with mission agencies/colleges/etc. with regards to the application, training and selection of enquirers, and the ongoing care and support of MOMs;
- To ensure that Fitzroy plays its full part as far as is possible in the spiritual, physical and emotional support of MOMs, and that Fitzroy is enriched by the experience.

10. The MSG will not be directly responsible for fund raising, financing, pastoral care or emergency/crisis management for the MOMs, but will aim to ensure that such support is in place, and will endeavour where possible to be in communication with the support groups of each, as appropriate. If Session/ Committee desires, the MSG will advise on the disbursement of funds allocated by Committee.

Educating & Mentoring of Fitzroy Family and Interested People

11. Fitzroy recognizes that it has a role in encouraging its members to be engaged in global mission issues, and to consider partnership in mission, including praying, giving, visiting and other practical support. The MSG will act as a resource to Fitzroy, in actively collecting, holding and updating information on overseas service opportunities, possibilities, organisations, programmes etc. Part of this may include developing a mentoring role with potentially interested people.

Discernment, Application, Accreditation & Endorsement Process

12. Fitzroy will implement a clear and open process by which an enquirer might become recognised and supported as a Fitzroy MOM, whether as an Overseas Personnel (OP), or a Supported Worker (SW). Guidelines for this process are set out in Annex A. Fitzroy has two categories of MOM:

Overseas Personnel (OP) are those who are formally endorsed by Kirk Session as having been 'sent' from Fitzroy and engaged by a Mission Agency which recognizes Fitzroy's role as the 'sending church'.

A Supported Overseas Worker (SW) is a Fitzroy member who has decided to live

and work overseas intentionally in a missional context, but who does not see themselves as formally 'endorsed' or 'sent' by Fitzroy, but who may nevertheless be supported prayerfully and otherwise, by Fitzroy. A SW will normally have been endorsed by the MSG and also by Kirk Session.

13. It is recognised that the process of initial enquiry, discussion and discernment may take a period of time, and will involve several informal prayerful conversations and discussions between the enquirer and several parties, both on and off the MSG, over a period of time. Annex A sets out several issues which will assist this discussion, recognising that there are many reasons why not all enquiries will result in the full endorsement and accreditation of Fitzroy.

14. Once the enquiry process is advanced to the degree that the enquirer wishes to make a formal application for consideration by the MSG, the following steps will be followed;

- The enquirer (now a candidate) will inform the MSG that he/she wishes to enter the formal application process.
- If informal conversations with the candidate have not yet taken place, MSG will meet with the candidate to discuss their vision, desire, goals, interests, etc.
- MSG will inform session of the candidate's desire to be formally considered. Note, it is not necessary that the Minister is involved at this stage.
- MSG will interview the candidate. Annex B lists the issues that should be covered in this interview.
- A representative from MSG will endeavour to make contact with the proposed Mission Agency, if there is one: to understand their vision and values; to understand the application and accreditation process and the stage the candidate is at in this process; to clarify expectations on each side; to discuss possible training needs; to discuss possible placement locations; to discuss financial needs, support, other practical needs and logistics. If a Mission Agency is not yet proposed, MSG will advise and assist the candidate in selecting one.
- MSG will then make a recommendation to Session, taking into account the needs of the candidate, the Mission Agency and the suitability of the candidate and their vision. The recommendation may be:
 - To accept the candidate as a MOM
 - Not to accept the candidate as a MOM
 - Other recommendations may include delaying the application for a period of time to for example; allow the candidate to develop emotionally or spiritually, to take time to further explore the areas outlined in Annex A and B or to enter a period of study and preparation for overseas service.
- If necessary, Session (or a delegation) may then meet the candidate, and confirm the approval/endorsement, or otherwise.
- Approved candidates may then be presented to the church to encourage prayer and support from the congregation.

15. It is recognised that not everyone who has a desire to serve overseas is suitable for this ministry. Working in a cross-cultural context in another country has particular

challenges and requires those who are spiritually mature, suitably gifted and have a proven ministry. It is the role of the MSG in cooperation with the Mission Agency to assess the gifts and suitability of the candidate. It is important for all to recognise the possibility and the wisdom of candidates being advised against overseas service. If, at any point in this process, the MSG or Session feels that the candidate has failed to meet the requirements or for other reasons is not suitable or ready, MSG will advise the candidate and provide reasons for the decision. Embarking on the evaluation process, even after a period of discussion and discernment, is not a guarantee of a positive decision.

16. Given the needs of the world and the pool of energy and talent in the Fitzroy family, and the number of ministries available, it is likely that the limited resources available to Fitzroy will constrain how many people can be formally endorsed and supported. It should be recognised that there are many valid means of serving, and many specialised agencies exist to support a wide range of useful activities and ministries. It may not be necessary or appropriate for all those from Fitzroy serving overseas to be formally accredited in this way. Fitzroy will recognise and encourage all those from its family who wish to serve missionally overseas, regardless of whether or not they become recognised MOMs.

Financial Considerations

17. Candidates should supply a realistic annual budget, ideally developed in conjunction with the Mission Agency, if any. MSG, in consultation with Session/Committee will determine the level of financial support to be provided.

It is not possible for Fitzroy to consider providing for the full financial needs of MOMs. At best, Fitzroy will commit to providing a part of the candidate's needs from the mission budget. In some cases, this may be supplemented by additional donations from the General Fund. In other cases, Fitzroy may decide not to support the MOM financially. The degree of financial support will depend partly on the needs of the MOM, the other sources of support, the other commitments of Fitzroy, and the available resources. Candidates will be encouraged to seek other sources of support, eg from other churches, individual supporters, grants and from earned income. It is increasingly difficult to fully finance mission workers from grants and gifts and innovative and imaginative ways should be sought to provide supplementary income.

18. Candidates may also receive direct financial support from members of the congregation in addition to that from the church. Candidates (and their Mission Agencies) will be expected to be open to the MSG and their other supporters with regards finances – needs and income – particularly when needs change, and also when the level of needs reduces.

19. In considering financial support, Fitzroy will consider its historic commitments to existing MOMs, the United Appeal and other Projects. It is the responsibility of Session to set the overall priorities for the church which will be reflected in how finances are allocated. It is possible that some accredited MOMs will not receive financial support from Fitzroy.

Engagement with Sending Organisation

20. Fitzroy will not be the main sending organization, and the MOMs will not be in any way employed by Fitzroy. Fitzroy will not be liable in any way under UK legislation for UK employment, health and safety, tax and national insurance, etc. Fitzroy will advise

MOMs to engage with a recognised, experienced organisation, such as a Mission Agency. Any partnership with such a sending organisation is important, and although different organisations operate in different ways, Fitzroy will seek to communicate and cooperate with the sending organization where appropriate. During the evaluation process, Fitzroy will seek information on the proposed sending organisation, recognising that some will be more compatible than others with the vision of Fitzroy. There will be some organisations that Fitzroy is uncomfortable working with, and this will be taken into account in the evaluation of the candidate and their proposals for service.

21. During the evaluation process, Fitzroy will seek information on the Mission Agency, if any, including; its aims, values, policies, missional understanding, faith basis, geographical sphere, type of ministries, selection process, financial requirements, pastoral and practical support, financing, spiritual support, and how it addresses pastoral care on field, accountability, disciplinary processes, leadership, mentoring, children's education, child protection, health care provision, medical insurance, emergency care, conflict resolution, debriefing, pension, national insurance, etc.

Support in Service and Expectations

22. Fitzroy will endeavour to support MOMs in the following ways;

- Prayer, with needs being notified to the church on a regular basis;
- Pastoral support and encouragement, through letters, parcels, phone calls;
- Visits in country, at appropriate intervals to be determined;
- Practical support with Home Assignments;
- Support during Home Assignments and at end of service.

Fitzroy will consider the ministry of the MOMs to be part of the ministry of Fitzroy, and would seek to be informed of the work, and of the church and Christian communities in the country of service.

23. From the MOM, Fitzroy will expect;

- Regular communication and updates on the life and work of the MOMs, not only on 'spiritual' or 'ministry' issues;
- Regular information prayer needs, both spiritual and practical;
- During each Home Assignment, an update to Fitzroy, in the service, or otherwise, as appropriate;
- During Home Assignments, and upon end of service, ongoing input into the life of Fitzroy, including reflection on life and work overseas, and issues facing the global church, ongoing prayer needs, etc.

Home Assignment

24. Fitzroy will expect the sending agency to take the lead in Home Assignment medical and pastoral debriefing. However, it is expected that the MSG will meet with the MOMs on Home Assignment to discuss the term of service and issues arising. Within the bounds of confidentiality, Fitzroy will expect the Mission Agency to inform MSG of any important pastoral issues that have arisen.

25. The MSG or the candidates Pastoral Support group (PSG) will ascertain any needs for Home Assignment – accommodation, transportation, etc. – and will publicise these in an attempt to meet them.

Pastoral Support Group (PSG)

26. All MOMs will be strongly encouraged to establish a Pastoral Support Group (PSG). Ideally this will be a small group of 4–8 people made up of friends and family. The members need not necessarily all be from Fitzroy, but ideally the Fitzroy family will have at least one representative on this group. Other churches may also be represented. The MSG need not necessarily be represented on the PSG, but should liaise closely to ensure that the MSG is aware of important needs and issues.

27. The PSG is an informal group whose purpose is to be involved in pastoral and practical support for the MOM; when overseas, when on home assignment and upon returning home. Specifically, the group will meet and pray regularly and be up to date with news, needs and prayer requests of the MOM. The PSG should maintain close, regular contact with the MOM and provide spiritual encouragement and accountability. Ideally, the PSG would take the lead in arranging visits, and arranging any needed practical support, eg for home assignment.

28. The PSG should be available from time to time to inform Fitzroy as to the wellbeing, news and needs of the MOM, including providing updates in the services.

29. Where current MOMs do not have a PSG, they will be strongly encouraged to establish one, as many experienced mission agencies emphasise the importance of such support.

Emergencies and Crisis Care

30. Fitzroy recognises that the church is not set up for the management of emergencies or crises overseas. In the event of a physical crisis (eg sudden serious illness or death, violent assault, kidnapping or hostage situations, war, natural disaster) or serious issues of morality, Fitzroy will expect the Mission Agency – or whatever other institution the MOM is engaged with – to take the lead in emergency care including repatriation where necessary. In these cases, Fitzroy will;

- pray and organise prayer;
- stay informed via the Mission Agency;
- only share information sensitively given possible political or confidentiality restrictions;
- attempt to assist with urgent financial needs (although we expect the Mission Agency to have insurance and contingency for such occasions);
- attempt to provide support to family and friends.

31. If the MOM is evacuated from crisis situations, Fitzroy will attempt to provide prayer, support and a healing environment, and pastoral care.

If re-deployment is necessary, this will be discussed positively with the Mission Agency and the MOM.

Professional Help

32. Fitzroy will attempt to recognise, along with the Mission Agency (if any), when professional input and help is needed, for example in cases of suicide risk, signs of psychosis, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, serious alcohol or substance misuse, self-destructive behaviour, violent tendencies or anger, signs of mental illness, physical health problems, conflict management, etc. In such cases, the MOM will be encouraged to seek professional assistance.

Termination of MOMs Status

33. When MOMs return home Fitzroy where possible will give support, encouragement and practical assistance. The drawdown of financial support will be determined in advance with the MOMs and the Mission Agency, depending on the circumstances. It is normal for the Mission Agency to fund a period of months (perhaps up to 6 months in the case of long term MOM service) to allow for adaptation and resettlement, depending on the circumstances. In most circumstances, Fitzroy will cease support of MOMs after a maximum of 6 months of return.

34. For unexpected termination and repatriation, additional debriefing and pastoral care may be required.

In cases where the repatriation and termination of service is required (or recommended) by the Mission Agency or other relevant agency, against the wishes of the MOM, Fitzroy will expect to be involved in discussions with the Mission Agency, and will seek to provide whatever additional pastoral support is appropriate. If the MOM breaks their relationship with the Mission Agency, Fitzroy will re-evaluate the situation, and reserves the right to withdraw its support, depending on the circumstances, taking into account the pastoral needs of the MOM.

35. Fitzroy reserves the right to withdraw support (or 'sent' status) from the MOM in cases of serious moral failure or other circumstances, even where the Mission Agency disagrees. However, all such cases shall be discussed in depth with the MOM and the Mission Agency, and such a decision shall not be taken lightly. Serious discussions regarding withdrawal of support will normally be held during Home Assignment.

Annex A. Guidelines for Selection

The purpose of these guidelines is to encourage enquirers who are considering ministry overseas to consider some key issues involved in their planning and to guide those involved in the selection/endorsement processes.

1. Candidates for endorsement must; be mature believers, have been a member of Fitzroy for at least 2 years, have been involved in some aspect of the ministry of Fitzroy for a period of time, have demonstrated a servant attitude and a willingness to serve, and have demonstrated an ability to use their gifts in ministry.

2. In general, candidates for work in a cross cultural context (ie overseas) should have a particular skill to offer, an ability to make friends and engage with people, and a flexible, adaptable attitude regarding change of plans. They should also be able to demonstrate a prior interest or involvement in engaging cross-culturally.

3. Candidates should be able to articulate a clear reason for their desire to serve overseas. For married couples, this should be true for both parties.

4. While candidates are encouraged to have a vision for their ministry (including a part of the world, people group, type of ministry, etc.), they should also be open to God's leading into other areas, as may be evident in suggestions from others (Fitzroy, mission agencies, others, etc.), recognising that God often has plans other than those we have formulated.

5. Fitzroy will wish to see that candidates have thought realistically about the type of role they may have, recognising that; i) communication, especially of important truths, is best in someone's heart language, ii) it takes time, dedication and perseverance to become fluent in another language, iii) there is a Church in all countries and most cities in the world, iv) that the best people to reach a people are their own people, v) that one major strategic aim of western Christians should be to partner with, build up and equip the church in other countries to carry out its own mission rather than have foreigners do it.

6. Fitzroy will encourage candidates to work within the structures of a recognised professional Mission Agency, or other professional organisation. Where in-country support (pastoral care, accountability structures, emergency and crisis support) is likely to be deficient, Fitzroy will strongly advise the candidate to take steps to put these in place, or to consider other options.

7. Fitzroy will not take on a role where we are the main agent of pastoral care and accountability, since this role cannot be done from a distance. Fitzroy would expect travel and health insurance, medical and psychological support, emergency support to be in place in the country of service, and will be reluctant to support candidates where these are not provided. If necessary, Fitzroy will work with candidates to select an appropriate Mission Agency with which to partner. Fitzroy will take into account the ethos and values of the Agency and it may be that Fitzroy will not be able to partner with certain agencies.

8. For long term cross-cultural service (more than two years), Fitzroy will strongly advise a period of cross-cultural training, even for mature Christians with a sound understanding of their faith, and may make their support contingent upon this.

9. Candidates endorsed by Fitzroy must accept that they have a role to feedback to Fitzroy, including;

- sharing prayer, practical and financial needs on a regular basis;
- communicating regularly regarding living situation, concerns, ministry, daily needs, etc.;
- educating Fitzroy about the church, the needs and the mission context in the

country of service.

10. It is important to recognize that not everyone who has a desire to serve overseas is suitable for this ministry. Working in a cross-cultural context in another country has particular challenges and requires those who are spiritually mature, suitably gifted and have a proven ministry. It should also be recognized that there are many valid means of serving, and many specialized agencies exist to support a wide range of useful activities and ministries in Ireland and overseas. It may not be necessary or appropriate for all those from Fitzroy serving overseas to be formally accredited as a MOM.

Annex B. Issues to be discussed in Application/Interview

Candidate

- Spiritual journey of the candidate;
- Biblical understanding of the candidate;
- Missional understanding of the candidate;
- Involvement in the mission of the Church, including in Fitzroy;

Vision of the Candidate

- Vision and aims of the candidate;
- Calling;
- Area and countries of interest;
- Proposed period of service

Sending Agency

- Mission Agencies of relevance/interest to the candidate and area/type of service.
- Information on the Mission Agency of interest, including; aims, values, policies, missional understanding, faith basis, geographical sphere, type of ministries, etc.
- Selection process of Mission Agency, including financial requirements.
- Involvement of local church
- Pastoral and practical aspects, including; financing, spiritual support, pastoral care on field, accountability, leadership, mentoring, children's education, health care provision, medical insurance, emergency care, pension, national insurance, etc.
- Issues of partnership with local church;

Cross-Cultural or Biblical Training

- Previous training or learning experience;
- Candidate's needs;

Financial and Prayer Needs

- Budget and financial needs, including travel, accommodation, living allowance, children's education; medical cover; home assignment, etc.

Involvement of Fitzroy

- Candidate's understanding of Fitzroy's involvement and commitment;
- Candidate's commitment to Fitzroy (information, prayer needs, practical and financial needs, feedback and education of Fitzroy);