

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH: SOUTHERN SYNOD

Update on Deployment Targets

1. All the ministerial deployment targets agreed within the URC rest on figures for the number of churches and the number of members. With the results from the churches' Annual Returns at the start of 2022 now available and published in the 2023 Year Book, all these targets can be updated.
2. The decline in members and number of churches in the Southern Synod during 2021 was lower than the average for the denomination, so the Synod's fair share of the total number of ministers available has risen slightly to just over 13%. In addition, the best estimates of the total number of URC ministers available over the next few years have been revised upwards slightly.
3. These revisions mean that the Synod's target number for planning purposes, which is the target number of ministers four years ahead, has risen. Last year our target number for 2026 was 34; this year our target number for 2027 is 35.
4. Within the Synod we have agreed to break down this target number to give a guide to each Area. Using the normal formula, this produces the following results:

Area	Previous Target (for 2026)	New Target (for 2027)	Actual (Feb 23)
CSUA	3.5	3.5	2.0
EKSA	3.5	3.5	4.5
S&SSA	8.0	8.5	5.6
SLSA-W	6.5	7.0	8.4
SLSA-E	7.5	7.5	7.75
WKESSA	5.0	5.0	6.0
	34.0	35.0	34.25

5. The myth that Southern Synod is chronically over-deployed is now thoroughly out of date. As known moves and likely retirements will take 13 of the present ministers away before the end of 2027, there is ample scope for bringing in new ministers without breaching our target. The departures are however disproportionately concentrated in S&SSA which is already well below target so might properly be regarded as the priority Area for new ministers.

John Ellis
 For the Deployment Group

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