

MINISTERS' HANDBOOK

Edition: March 2018



Introduction

As part of the Ministries Council's commitment to supporting all those involved in the ministries of the Church, we are pleased to provide for you the Minister's Handbook. You will be aware that, as ministers, you are legally considered to be 'office holders' rather than 'employees' – an important and historic distinction. That does not mean, however, that you should be left without the protection which modern legislation has brought to all kinds of workers in terms of employment law. It is the policy of the Ministries Council to seek to extend to office holders, as far as possible, rights equivalent to those enjoyed by employees. You will find in this handbook a range of policies and provisions which offer support to you in your role.

Should you require more detailed information or advice, contact details are included throughout the handbook. Please note that to contact any person, team, department or council based at the Church Offices in Edinburgh, you can phone 0131 225 5722 and ask to be put through to the relevant place. This phone number and the Offices' address, along with key websites and the central Ministries Council email address on the back cover of this handbook.

This handbook will be reviewed annually. The latest version can be found in the Resources section of the Ascend website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

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1. Ascend: Support and Development

ascend

Since 2017, the Church's Support and Development Services have been delivered through Ascend. This encompasses the work of the Ministries Council's Training and Pastoral Support teams. The Ascend website gives comprehensive information about all areas of support and development:

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

CORE SERVICES

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Pastoral Supervision

Coaching

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ascend |

Counselling

Postgraduate Fund

FFY CMD Allowance

Spiritual Accompaniment

Leadership Development

Key services offered through Ascend

PASTORAL SUPPORT

The Ministries Council's Pastoral Support Team includes two members of staff available for direct pastoral consultation. The team works closely with the Pastoral and Vocational Care Task Group to develop and deliver pastoral support services, while also monitoring and researching their effectiveness. To contact the Pastoral Support Team, email:

pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk or phone **0131 225 5722**. The Team can also make referrals to and advise you about external support options, some of which are listed below.

Support is also available at a local level from your Presbytery, usually through Presbytery chaplains or pastoral advisers. This provision varies from Presbytery to Presbytery; you can contact your local Presbytery office to find out what is available. The Ministries Pastoral Support Team continues to work with Presbyteries to build effective local support.

MDC - MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT CONVERSATION

MDC is a confidential discussion with a trained facilitator that supports and enables the minister to reflect on their practice of ministry in their context. It is offered free of charge by trained facilitators. For more information, to read the facilitators' profiles or to book an MDC, please visit the Ascend website.



PASTORAL SUPERVISION

Pastoral Supervision offers a regular, intentional and boundaried space in which a practitioner skilled in supervision (the supervisor) meets with one or more supervisees to look together at the supervisee's practice. It is a relationship characterised by trust, confidentiality, support and openness that offers you freedom and safety to explore issues arising in your work. The Pastoral Support Team can give advice about finding a supervisor, or match you with a suitable supervisor. In some specific circumstances the Council can fund Pastoral Supervision. For more information and to see our list of recommended supervisors, please visit the Ascend website. You can also contact the Pastoral Support Team for more information (see Pastoral Support section on previous page).

STUDY LEAVE

Study Leave is an opportunity to undertake ministerial development as defined by you. It is available to ministers with five years' service in the Church of Scotland. Each year you can apply for 14 days' leave and up to £275. This can be accrued for seven years, to a maximum of 98 days and £1925. For full details of the scheme, including how to apply and copies of reporting and expense forms, please visit the Ascend website or contact studyleave@churchofscotland.org.uk.

COUNSELLING

Counselling offers you a safe, confidential place to talk about your life and anything that may be confusing, painful or uncomfortable. It allows you to share with someone who is trained to listen attentively and to help you work towards improving your wellbeing. If you think you would benefit from counselling, please contact the Pastoral Support Team (see Pastoral Support section on previous page). They can offer guidance on finding a counsellor and fund up to six sessions of counselling. There is more information about counselling on the Ascend website.

COACHING

There are two key distinctions between coaching and other professional relationships such as therapy or counselling: In coaching, the focus is firmly on the here and now, and the premise is that the client is the expert in their own context. The coaching conversation starts with the assertion that the client is 'creative, resourceful and whole' and as such holds the answers to any questions they might care to pose. The Pastoral Support Team can advise you about coaching and help you to find a suitable coach.

The Church also has a small team of coaches who offer their services free of charge to ministers. The Pastoral Support Team can put you in touch with one of the coaches, subject to their availability. There is more information about coaching on the Ascend website.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

The Council has access to a network of people specifically trained in the ministry of Spiritual Direction (also called Spiritual Accompaniment). Individuals seeking direction or accompaniment will have to pay for this themselves, but the Council has made such sessions available at no cost for Probationers during their final placement and through to the end of the second post-ordination year for up to four sessions per year.

2. Terms and Conditions

Illness, Leave of Absence and Income Protection

Reporting illness and absence

If you are ill and going to be off work, please notify the Ministries Council and Presbytery Clerk as soon as possible. The Ministries Council can be notified by an email to pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk or a phone call to 0131 225 5722. Absence can be "self-certified" for the first seven days, using a form that can be obtained from the Pastoral Support Team via the above email address or phone number. If the absence is longer than seven days, a medical certificate should be obtained from your GP or other medical professional. This can be sent in to the Ministries Council by email or post. Please let us know when you go back to work after sick leave. It is important for your Income Protection (see below) that we have accurate records of sickness.

During a leave of absence

If you are on leave due to ill health you must not undertake any ministerial function or duty, except with the express permission of the Presbytery or appropriate health advisers, and within the Regulations of the Benefits Agency. You are not responsible for obtaining pulpit supply; the responsibility for obtaining pulpit supply when a minister becomes sick is the Session Clerk's.

Long-term illness

In respect of long-term illness, the Ministries Council might suggest a referral for an Occupational Health Assessment, and the Presbytery, informed by the Council, may apply the Long Term Illness Act (Act 15 2002, as amended). The Act can be found here: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/church_law/acts. In cases of long-term absence, a locum might be appointed to work alongside the Interim Moderator. Arranging this is not your responsibility. More information, including the relevant forms and contact details, can be found here: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/ministries_resources

Support

The Pastoral Support Team is here to advise and support you, so please do not hesitate to get in touch. The Team advises both ministers and Presbyteries in all matters relating to absence, illness and support, including phased returns to work.

Income Protection

Occasionally, a minister's medical condition will mean that they are no longer well enough to continue in ministry. In these rare but serious cases, as part of the pension benefits, an income protection policy is in place with Unum Limited. Eligibility for this benefit will be assessed by Unum through a combination of a medical assessment and referral to previous medical records.

When it becomes clear that a minister is not going to be able to return to work, the Pastoral Support Team will refer them to Unum for an initial, indicative assessment, with a final assessment being made in advance of stipend ceasing. If the minister is considered eligible for the benefit, Income Protection Payments of one-third of pensionable stipend are payable up to state pension age. Pension contributions continue at the rate of 11.5% of income, again up to state pension age. For the first two years of illness, Ministries Council pays the full stipend and associated pension contribution.

Please note that Unum reserves the right to medically assess individuals at regular intervals if they are in receipt of Income Protection Payments. Due to the continued hope that individuals will recover sufficient health to return to work, the option to retire early on the grounds of ill health is no longer available as part of these insurance arrangements.

Guidelines on alcohol and drug abuse

The Ministries Council recognises alcohol and drug abuse as primarily a health problem requiring treatment and assistance. Alcohol and drug abuse are defined as drinking or the use of other drugs, intermittently or continually, so as to interfere with a person's health and social functioning and/or work capability or conduct. The Council, through the Pastoral Support Team, seeks to secure the best possible help, treatment, sympathy, understanding and encouragement for any minister suffering from this problem, so that you can be restored to good health.

If you recognise this problem in yourself, please contact your GP or another relevant health professional in the first instance. You can also contact the Pastoral Support Team (pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk) for confidential advice or guidance, including to request a referral for an Occupational Health Assessment. If you are going to be off work, please follow the guidelines above about leave of absence.

If you recognise this problem in another, such as a spouse, friend or colleague, we recommend that you make contact with our Pastoral Support Team for confidential advice on how to help the individual(s) concerned.

We encourage Presbyteries to grant leave of absence for treatment, to provide individual pastoral support to the minister, and where applicable to their family, and to arrange for an Interim Moderator to cover the minister's duties during the period of absence and recuperation.

Stipend

Ministers are entitled to a stipend to release them to discharge the duties of their calling to Parish Ministry. The stipend rate is set annually by the Council of Assembly on the recommendation of the Ministries Council, with the National Stipend Scale being published annually in the Report of the Ministries Council to the General Assembly.

The National Stipend Scale is a five point scale. Parish Ministers move up one point on the scale after each of the first five years of their ministry and then remain on point 5 of the scale.

The National Stipend Scale for 2018 is as follows:

- Point 1 £27,044
- Point 2 £28,813
- Point 3 £30,581
- Point 4 £32,351
- Point 5 £33,234

Part-time Parish Ministers are entitled to a stipend calculated pro rata according to the percentage of post in the Presbytery Plan (e.g. 50%), using the rates published annually on the National Stipend Scale.

Parish Ministers are Office Holders rather than employees. Part-time working does not alter the status of the Parish Minister as Office Holder.

Beyond the stipend paid to them through the Ministries payroll, ministers may not receive any other form of remuneration from their congregation relating to the discharge of their ministerial duties. For further details, please refer to the Regulations for Remuneration and Reimbursement of Parish Ministers (Regulations I 2015, amended by Regulations VI 2016). All Regulations can be found here:

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/church_law/regulations.

In relation to Parish Ministers offering pastoral cover or pulpit supply in support of colleagues during absence (on leave or through illness), this is part of fulfilment of the role of Parish Minister and no pulpit supply fee or pastoral cover payment is payable. Similarly, in the conduct of funerals, no Parish Minister may charge a fee to conduct a funeral or related visit either in their own Parish or that of another minister.

Ministers have the right to be provided with a manse and have a duty to live in it and discharge the duties of their office from it, whether they hold office on a full-time or part-time basis. Regulations VII, 2007 (Manses) and III, 2013 (Manse Adjudication Committee) provide further clarity about the responsibilities of upkeep of the Manse and the duty of living in the Manse of the charge.

If you would like more information about matters relating to stipend and payroll, please contact the payroll department: payroll.dept@churchofscotland.org.uk

Allowances & Expenses

Details of current allowances and expenses are included in the Ministries Council Report to the General Assembly each year. The costs below are correct as of 1st January 2018, and are subject to change by the General Assembly. Please refer to the Finance section of the latest Ministries Council Report for the most recent figures. A copy can be found on the Church website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/general_assembly

Summary of expenses to be paid by the congregation on behalf of the minister

1. Communion expenses incurred.
2. Pulpit Supply on seven Sundays in any calendar year, and supply during the minister's attendance at the General Assembly as a commissioner (see Pulpit Supply section below).
3. The costs of providing Pastoral Cover (should such payment be necessary) for six weeks in any calendar year, or in the case of part-time Parish Ministers, pro rata according to the percentage of post in the Presbytery Plan (eg 50%).
4. Pulpit supply for one additional Sunday and the costs of providing pastoral cover for an additional week when the minister is a Commissioner at the General Assembly.
5. Telephone line rental and calls incurred in the performance of ministerial duties including, where agreed in advance, for a mobile phone.
6. The cost of internet access at a level required for the performance of ministerial duties.
7. Computer hardware, software and consumables necessary for the performance of ministerial duties.
8. Stationery and postage stamps for use in relation to work.
9. Travelling expenses (see below).

The above expenses may be paid directly by the congregation or may be reclaimed by the minister from the congregation.

For both telephone and internet expenses, the Church of Scotland should be the subscribers and the account should be paid directly by the congregational treasurer with a contribution towards costs being made by the minister in respect of all non-church use.

Discretionary Expenses

In addition to the reimbursable expenses listed above and the essential ongoing care and maintenance of the manse, kirk sessions may decide from time to time to cover some fabric related costs relating to the running of the manse. Such costs are discretionary, but it is good practice to assist with costs which maintain the Church's property in good order.

Any expenses to be claimed by the minister must be agreed by or on behalf of the Kirk Session in advance and the claim must be accompanied by appropriate receipts. Examples of possible costs are gardening materials and help where the garden is larger than the domestic norm, or help and materials for cleaning of public areas.

No reimbursement can be made to the minister with respect to the cost of heating and lighting the manse. In order to effectively discharge their ministerial duties, ministers may also, from time to time, purchase clerical garments or theological books, subscribe to journals, arrange for some form of Spiritual Direction or Professional / Pastoral Supervision, or attend courses and training events. Congregations may choose to contribute to some or all of the cost of these.

In relation to reimbursement, ministers should distinguish between items expended in the course of daily duty (e.g. travel costs, telephone usage, or stamps), which are reclaimed from the congregation, and items which become the property of the minister (e.g. books or vestments). In some circumstances, a proportion of the cost of these latter expenses may be reclaimable against the minister's personal tax allowance (receipts for which should be retained by the minister).

Beyond those items listed in the Regulations, no other expenses or remuneration may be paid by congregations or claimed by ministers.

The Ministries Council provides study opportunities for ministers through its Study Leave Scheme and a planned programme of Continuing Ministerial Development, both of which may also contribute towards some of the expenses noted above.

Island allowances

The inner and outer island allowances are currently:

- Outer Island Allowance: £1,566
- Inner Island Allowance: £616

Travelling Expenses

Where ministers use their own car for pastoral duties, they will be reimbursed at 45p per mile for first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile for all remaining miles. Ministers also receive capital reimbursement of £80 per month. This is paid at the same rate for both full-time and part-time postholders. A tax and National Insurance liability will arise on the capital reimbursement.

Ministers using their own motorbike for pastoral duties will be reimbursed at 24p per mile. Those using a pedal bike will be reimbursed at 20p per mile.

In relation to travelling expenses, ministers are required to keep an up-to-date Log Book listing actual mileage covered in the discharge of ministerial duties, against which expenses are reclaimed. Presbyteries are required, by instruction of the General Assembly, to carry out an annual inspection of all ministers' Log Books.

Alternatively congregations can make other provisions for their minister's travelling arrangements by providing a car and meeting all of the actual expenses involved (and not the laid down motor mileage rates). The treasurer must ensure that the resultant benefit in kind is properly accounted for to HM Revenue & Customs by notifying our payroll department who will complete a form P11D.

For more information about travel expenses or related tax issues, please contact:
ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk

Removal Expenses and Disturbance Allowance

When a minister is called to a charge, the congregation(s) to which the minister is called will pay the removal costs incurred in transporting the minister's personal effects into the manse. In addition, the congregation will also pay the minister, upon production of appropriate receipts, a Manse Disturbance Allowance of up to £1,740.

The Manse Disturbance Allowance is intended to be used for providing or altering curtains, carpets and furnishings in the public rooms and study in the manse. This allowance could be extended to cover the cost of altering or refitting curtains, carpets and other furnishings in rooms in the manse which are only used by

the minister and his or her family. If a minister moves into their own house, rather than a manse, then the payment of a manse disturbance allowance would not be appropriate and no payments should be made by congregation(s) in respect of new curtains, carpets and furniture.

If a Charge has an average income base of less than £30,000 the Ministries Council will meet the full cost of the removal expenses and disturbance allowance. When a Charge's average income base is between £30,001 and £60,000 application may be made to the Ministries Council for assistance in meeting these costs. Application should be made in writing to the Ministries Finance Manager and a copy of the latest congregational accounts enclosed. Any information relevant to the application should be set out in the letter of application. In all other cases the manse disturbance allowance shall be paid directly to the minister by the congregation.

When a minister retires on account of age or infirmity, and in the case of a widow(er) of a minister who dies in service, the Ministries Council will meet the cost of removal expenses.

Should a minister be required to move to a different manse during their incumbency, the congregation will pay the removal costs and Manse Disturbance Allowance. If the congregation is not able to fund these costs, they should contact the General Trustees (gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk) in the first instance. If the congregation is still not able to find the required funds, the Ministries Council will fund the payments to make sure the minister is not personally responsible. The Council will seek to recoup these payments from congregation at the earliest opportunity.

For further information or advice, please contact Ministries Finance:
ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk

Practical concerns

Whether your move is being paid for by the congregation or the Ministries Council, the arrangements for removal are made through the Council. You need to obtain three quotes for removal costs, one of which must be from Pickfords. You should indicate that the Church of Scotland, Ministries Council, is paying for the move and you will be required to give details of the move. You do not need a definite date for your move, but you should always try to give as much notice as possible since requirements for a move arranged at short notice cannot always be guaranteed.

The Ministries Council has arrangements with the following companies, who are used to working with the Church of Scotland. You are advised to contact these companies first: Pickfords, Britannia, G. B. Liners Limited, Bishop's Move, Gerard Removers, McLeod Removals Limited, Kilmarnock Removals and Classic Removals. If the quotation is acceptable then, after contacting the Ministries Council for approval you should sign and return the acceptance portion to the appropriate office and they will book the move. Please note that the above procedures should be followed even where the removal cost is to be met by a congregation.

If you decide to move with one of these companies then the Ministries Council will settle the account directly and, where applicable, arrange with the congregation to reimburse the Council.

New Ministers' Furnishing Loan (NMFL)

The Ministries Council can offer a loan of up to £1,000 to help newly ordained ministers in their first charge. Loans are interest free and repayable over three years in monthly installments. The repayments are deducted from stipend at source.

If the borrower ceases to hold a Church of Scotland charge, or leaves Council employment, they are to repay the outstanding balance of the loan. If the borrower is owed money from another fund or source held by the Council or the General Treasurer of the Church of Scotland, the Council can offset these sums against the car loan to reduce the borrower's or the estate's indebtedness to the car loan fund.

A minister in their first charge cannot take out an NMFL and the maximum car loan (£5000) in the same year.

Manse accommodation expenses

HM Revenue & Customs recognises that a stipend is a living and not a salary. They have therefore agreed a process with the Church of Scotland whereby, for tax purposes, manse accommodation expenses can be deducted from stipend before arriving at taxable earnings. In order to benefit from this arrangement you need to complete an annual return of expenses incurred. This return should be made to the Ministries Finance Team: ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk.

A number of ministers employ someone to clean their manse, which can have tax implications for the person so employed. Ignorance of that individual's PAYE position is not a defence and it would be recommended that a P46 be obtained by the minister when employing an individual. In the case of such payments to an individual for work done, the expenses should be for the tax year to 5 April.

The appropriate provisional entries are processed through the monthly payroll during the tax year (from April to the following March). A reconciliation between the provisional and actual figures is carried out following 31 March each year.

Car Leasing

A number of leasing companies are authorised to contact those engaged in the ministries of the Church with car leasing offers. These will change from time to time and the Council encourages interested parties to check the details of each offer with a view to deciding the most appropriate deal for them.

All car leasing agreements are contracts between the individual and the company concerned. The Council is happy to commend these schemes but is not a party to the contract and does not act as an intermediary in disputes.

Please contact Ministries Finance for more information: ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk

Car Loans

The Ministries Council has a Car Loan Fund which can be used to give loans to ministers in charges in Scotland and England, to help them to buy a car. The amount of each loan is decided by the Ministries Council; the current maximum is £5000. Car loans are available interest free to ministers on years 1 and 2 of the National Stipend Scale. Where the stipend/salary is in excess of year 2, the loan will incur an interest charge at the current rate of 6%.

Loans are repaid over three years in monthly instalments, starting on the last day of the month following payment of the loan. Loan repayments are deducted from stipend/salary at source. The borrower is responsible for the paying insurance, road tax and all running and maintenance for the vehicle, and it must be insured under a fully comprehensive policy for as long as any part of the loan remains unpaid.

If the borrower ceases to hold a Church of Scotland charge, or leaves Council employment, they are to repay the outstanding balance of the loan. Likewise, in the event of the borrower's death, the loan is due for immediate repayment and forms a debt against the estate of the deceased. In either of these cases, if the borrower or the estate of the deceased is owed money from another fund or source held by the Council or the General Treasurer of the Church of Scotland, the Council can offset these sums against the car loan to reduce the borrower's or the estate's indebtedness to the car loan fund.

For more information about the Fund including how to apply, please contact: ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk

Tax

Ministers' personal income tax allowance

Ministers as 'Holders of an Office' are entitled to certain tax allowances on aspects of expenses incurred in fulfilling that office. It is however worth noting that arrangements have been made with HM Revenue & Customs regarding the following:

1. Travelling Expenses.
2. Manse Accommodation Expenses.
3. Listed Expenses.

In addition, individual ministers may wish to make a more detailed personal return covering such items as the cost of repairing/replacing clerical robes or secretarial assistance. For information on self-assessment, please refer to the HMRC website: www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/tmaself-assessment.shtml.

Ministers are responsible for probity in relation to their own tax affairs.

Benefits in kind

The following are considered benefits in kind for tax purposes. The implications of each are explained in the relevant sections above.

Removal costs and the Manse Disturbance Allowance, should the total exceed £8,000.

Manse Accommodation Expenses, since these expenses must invariably cover an element of expenditure which is of a personal nature. However, because ministers are considered as occupying the manse on a representative basis, the Benefit in Kind associated with the Manse Accommodation is limited to either 75% of Manse Accommodation Expenses, or 10% of 75% of Taxable Earnings, whichever is lower.

Loans where they are above £10,000 and given with less than commercial interest.

For more information about benefits in kind, please contact Ministries Finance:
ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk

Pulpit supply

A minister is entitled to seven Sundays' Pulpit Supply in respect of holidays and one Sunday's pulpit supply when fulfilling duties as a commissioner to the General Assembly. These costs are to be met by the congregation.

Pulpit Supply during a minister's absence due to illness, compassionate leave, administrative suspension, Study Leave, or Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave is first paid for by the congregation and then reclaimed from the Ministries Council. Congregational Treasurers can access the forms for reclaiming Pulpit Supply from the following places:

- For sickness absence, compassionate leave, maternity/paternity/adoption leave, and administrative suspension, contact pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk
- For Study Leave, visit the Ascend website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

Presbyteries are responsible for making arrangements for Pulpit Supply.

Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave and Pay

For further information about any of the information in this section, please contact the Ministries Council's Pastoral Support Team: pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk

Please note that the Ministries Council reimburses your congregation for all Pulpit Supply costs relating to Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Shared Parental Leave and Adoption Leave. For information about how these costs can be reclaimed, please contact ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk

Maternity Leave

Eligibility for Maternity Leave:

- Maternity Leave is available to female ministers in recognised Church of Scotland appointments where stipend or salary is paid through the centralised Payment of Stipend Scheme.
- All ministers, regardless of service, are entitled to 26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML).
- Those who have been in the Stipend Scheme for at least 26 continuous weeks by the date of notification to the Presbytery and the Ministries Council are also entitled to a further 26 weeks' Additional Maternity Leave (AML).

Notification:

- You must notify your Presbytery and the Ministries Council, in writing, of the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), at least fifteen weeks prior to that date. You should also enclose your MatB1 certificate with this form where possible. This needs to be the original certificate, not a copy. Your GP or Midwife will typically provide you with a MatB1 certificate around the 20th week of your pregnancy. Please send your certificate to: Ministries Council, Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN.
- You must also inform Presbytery, Ministries Council, in writing, of the date at which you wish your Maternity Leave to start. The earliest that you may start your Maternity Leave is 11 weeks before your Expected Week of Childbirth. Your Maternity Leave can start on any day of the week. Once Ministries Council has received this information from you, you will receive a letter from the Payroll Department setting out the date on which you are expected to return to work, if you take your full entitlement to maternity leave.
- If you wish to change the return to work date, you need to give Presbytery, Ministries Council and Payroll at least eight weeks' notice, in writing, of your new return to work date. Your return to work may be delayed where the eight weeks' notice is not provided. It may not however be delayed beyond the end of your 52 weeks maternity leave.

You must continue to carry out ministerial duties up to the agreed start date of your Maternity Leave, then cease to undertake all ministerial duties during the period of Maternity Leave. You are entitled, but not obliged, to work 10 KIT (Keep In Touch) days during Maternity Leave. These might be used to attend, for example, meetings or training.

Maternity Pay

- Maternity Pay starts on the same date as Maternity Leave.
- The period of Ordinary Maternity Leave (i.e. the first 26 weeks of Maternity Leave) are payable at full stipend.
- The Maternity Pay that you receive during Ordinary Maternity Leave is inclusive of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), which is payable to the Church by the Government for all 'employees' with over 26 weeks' continuous service at the date of notification. Any SMP payable to the Church will be processed by the Ministries Council and this, along with any Statutory Sick Pay that is recovered, will be retained by the Council.
- If you choose to take the period of Additional Maternity Leave (i.e. the further 26 weeks available to those

who have been who have been in the Stipend Scheme for at least 26 continuous weeks by the date of notification, as above), you will receive Statutory Maternity Pay only. This is either £140.98 a week or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower. In exceptional circumstances the Ministries Council may make payment of stipend for some of the period of Additional Maternity Leave.

Adoption Leave and Pay

Adoption Leave and Pay is the same as Maternity Leave and Pay, with the following provisos:

- To qualify for Adoption Leave and Pay, you must have been matched with a child for placement by a UK adoption agency.
- You must notify your Presbytery and the Ministries Council, in writing, of your intention to take Adoption Leave within seven days of being notified by your adoption agency that you have been matched with a child for adoption.
- In order to qualify for Adoption Pay, you need to send in to the Ministries Council a matching certificate from the adoption agency.
- Only one member of a couple adopting a child is entitled to Adoption Leave and Pay. The other may be entitled to Paternity Leave and Pay.

Paternity Leave

Eligibility for Paternity Leave:

Male ministers are entitled to two weeks' Paternity Leave, which must be taken in one block of either one or two weeks and should be completed within 56 days of the date of birth of the baby or the placement of a child newly placed for adoption.

Notification:

You need to inform your Presbytery and the Ministries Council of your intention to take Paternity Leave at least eight weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth or placement. You can do this using a self-certification form which is available from the Ministries Finance Team: ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk. Please contact the team in good time as a delay in returning your Paternity Leave form might result in you not being paid.

Paternity Pay

You will be paid your full stipend during Paternity Leave. The stipend that you receive during Paternity Leave is inclusive of Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP), which is payable to the Church by the Government for all 'employees'. Any SPP payable to the Church in respect of your Paternity Leave will be processed and retained by the Council.

Shared Parental Leave and Pay

You are also entitled to Shared Parental Leave and Pay, which gives those with caring responsibilities for babies or newly adopted children the opportunity to share up to 52 weeks' leave should they wish to do so. Parents taking SPL can take leave in separate blocks, returning to work in between blocks, and can be on leave at the same time. If you are eligible, you are entitled to submit up to three 'period of leave' notices and are entitled to take SPL on those dates if a continuous period of leave is requested.

Please contact the Ministries Council for more information: ministries@churchofscotland.org.uk

Hardship

If you are struggling financially due to maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave or pay, please contact the Ministries Council's Pastoral Support Team: pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk

Pensions and Planning for Retirement

It is important to begin planning for retirement well in advance of the date that you intend to retire. You need to think about three key areas: finance, housing and lifestyle. There is information in the following sections about the Housing and Loan Fund, which can help to provide housing for retired ministers, as well as widows and widowers of ministers.

Notifying People about Retirement

There is not a set notice period for retirement, but we advise that you give your Presbytery as much notice as possible. When you know that date at which you intend to retire, you need to inform the following people/ departments:

1. Your Presbytery and Kirk Session
2. Ministries Council: ministries@churchofscotland.org.uk
3. Ministries Finance: ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk
4. Payroll: payroll.dept@churchofscotland.org.uk
5. Your pension providers (see below)

Pensions

Ministers are currently covered by one or both of the following pension schemes: the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministers and Overseas Missionaries (now closed), and the Church of Scotland Pension Plan from Legal and General. You might also have your own, private pension plan(s) or a pension from a former employer. You need to plan in advance how you wish to use these pension funds when you reach retirement. Please bear in mind that pension payments do not start automatically at state pension age; both the Church pension scheme and the Legal & General scheme require that you notify them of when you wish to start drawing your pension.

You might wish to consult an Independent Financial Adviser in order to ensure that you make the most of your income in retirement. For instance, it is possible, even in the last months of work, to make significant tax savings by investing in Additional Voluntary Contributions. Here, the services of an Independent Financial Adviser are invaluable.

From Elaine: A defined contribution pension scheme, operated by Legal & General is in place for Parish Ministers.

The defined benefit pension scheme is now closed to future accrual and new members.

Useful contact details

The Church of Scotland Pensions Department

The Pensions Department can provide information and advice relating to the Church of Scotland pension scheme. They cannot advise about Legal and General pensions.

pensions@churchofscotland.org.uk
0131 225 5722

Legal and General

employerdedicatedteam@landg.com
0345 070 2628
www.legalandgeneral.com/churchofscotland

Wren Stirling Financial Planning Ltd

Independent Financial Advisers who have worked closely with Church of Scotland ministers for a number of years. They also send two representatives to the annual Pre-Retirement Conference (see below).

jackie.coyne@wrensterling.com

Andy.Scott@wrensterling.com

0330 123 1848

www.wrensterling.com

Department of Work and Pensions

For information about your State Pension

www.gov.uk/state-pension-statement

Other advisory agencies

Unbiased (for help finding regulated independent financial advisers): 0800 023 6868. www.unbiased.co.uk

Pensionwise (for free and impartial government guidance about your defined contribution pension options):

0800 138 3944. www.pensionwise.gov.uk

The Pensions Advisory Service (for free information, advice and guidance on pensions): 0300 123 1047.

www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk

Pre-Retirement Conference

Whether you decide to retire at state pension age or before that date, or plan to continue working into your 70s, you and your spouse/civil partner will be invited to attend the Church's annual Pre-Retirement Conference in the year that you turn 64. This usually takes place in the third week in January. It is in part a 'thank you' from the Church for the many years of service that you have given, and to your spouse for their support. It is a chance for you to step away from the parish for a couple of days, to relax and enjoy good food, and to think about retirement with others who are at the same stage in their ministry. It is also an invaluable opportunity to receive advice about the financial and the lifestyle changes that come with retirement. Sessions will be run by representatives from the Church's Pensions Department and Housing and Loan Fund, well as independent financial and legal experts, all of whom you will have the opportunity to talk to individually.

There will be a number of recently retired ministers on hand to talk about their experiences of retirement, and the Pastoral Support Team will talk about wellbeing and lifestyle in retirement, as well as being on hand for individual pastoral conversations. Invitations are sent out in the autumn for a conference the following January. You will have the option to be invited to a future conference if you do not wish to attend in the year that you turn 64.

Housing and Loan Fund

The Church of Scotland Housing and Loan Fund for Retired Ministers and Widows and Widowers of Ministers, to give the full title, was established by the General Assembly to facilitate the provision of housing accommodation for retired ministers and widows or widowers of ministers. The Trustees may also consider providing assistance to:

- Those who have managed to house themselves, but are seeking to move to more suitable accommodation.
- Spouses of ministers who are forced to leave the manse due to marriage breakdown. Please contact the Ministries Council's Pastoral Support Team in the first instance for further guidance: pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk

If an application to the Fund is successful, help may be given either by providing a house to rent or advancing a house purchase loan. The trustees may grant tenancy of one of their existing houses or they may agree to purchase for rental occupation an appropriate house of an applicant's choosing. Leases are normally on very advantageous terms for rental levels. Alternatively, the trustees may grant a housing loan of up to 70% of a house purchase price but with an upper ceiling. Favourable rates of interest are charged.

Please note that the trustees are not able to offer assistance with house purchase to a minister more than 12 months prior to their retirement date.

Applications

The procedure for processing applications varies and depends mainly upon the timing of their submission. There are three broad categories:

1. All those who have an immediate need and those who are to retire within one year.
2. Those who are within a period commencing five years before either (a) normal retiral age or (b) declared retirement date if earlier or later, but not yet within one year of retiral.
3. Those who expect to retire within the next ten years but do not intend to do so for at least five years

The Trustees will give a firm commitment to those in categories one and two. Those in category three will not be given a firm commitment, but will be placed on a Preliminary Applications List, and given an indication of the likely assistance which may be provided. When they reach the point where they are five years from retirement, they will be required to submit a fresh Application Form.

Further information

The day-to-day business and correspondence of the Housing and Loan Fund is carried out by the Secretary of the Fund, who has a very wide ranging experience of the problems facing ministers and their families at this difficult time. Ministers and their families can have a confidential conversation with the Secretary on matters relating to housing in retirement.

The Secretary can also be contacted for a full copy of the Housing and Loan Fund's Guidance Notes, from which the above information is extracted, as well as an application form. You can contact the Secretary in writing or by phone using the details at the top of this page, or by email at housingandloan@churchofscotland.org.uk. A copy of the application form can also be downloaded from the Church's website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/stewardship_finance_and_trusts/housing_and_loan_fund

Please note that the Housing and Loan Fund is an autonomous Trust. The Trustees of the Fund should not be confused with the General Trustees.

3. Other Church Department and External Agencies

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about preventing harm and abuse, and making a timely and appropriate response if it occurs. It is a key challenge for everyone in the Church.

Since 1997, the Church of Scotland has embraced the challenge of keeping people as safe as they can be in our congregations, services and projects. One of the means to a safe church for all is to ensure that the Church adapts to new changes in legislation, policy and practice that is designed to keep people safe from harm and abuse.

Safe recruitment

Safe recruitment is a crucial aspect of keeping children and protected adults safe. The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 introduced the new Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme in Scotland in 2011. The new PVG Scheme replaces the previous Enhanced Disclosure check. The new scheme aims to ensure that those who have regular contact with vulnerable groups through the workplace (in paid and unpaid positions), are suitable to undertake regulated work.

All Ministers of Word and Sacrament are required to have a PVG Scheme Membership and are also required to complete a Ministries Council Self Declaration form.

In addition to formal systems such as the PVG Scheme, Ministers, Kirk Sessions and Financial Boards have a pivotal role in creating a culture where the safety and wellbeing of all individuals is promoted.

Training

Ministers will normally be expected to take part in safeguarding training and be:

- conversant with policy in this area
- clear about measures to be implemented by Kirk Sessions
- clear about action to be taken in the event of an allegation of harm or abuse
- aware of good child and adult protection practice in their pastoral work

Safeguarding input has been designed for inclusion in Ministries Council training for candidates, Ordained Local Ministers, Transferring Ministers, and Readers. Courses for Candidates for Ordained Local Ministers, Full Time Ministry and the Readership are run annually while that for Transferring Ministers is on-demand.

Ministers are also encouraged to update their training, and should attend locally run Kirk Session Safeguarding Training and Volunteer Safeguarding Training. If ministers choose to be members of their Safeguarding Panel, the Safeguarding Service recommends they also attend Safeguarding Coordinator Training.

To see what local safeguarding training is available they should visit www.churchofscotland.org.uk/training. If there is nothing suitable, ministers should contact their local Safeguarding Presbytery Contact whose details will also be listed on the Safeguarding Training Webpage.

If Ministers would like more bespoke Safeguarding Training delivered for them or have any questions in relation to Safeguarding Training, they should contact the Safeguarding Training Officer by emailing safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk or calling 0131 240 2256 to see what is available.

Managing those who pose a risk

Public protection and the management of those who pose a risk, is a developing area of work within safeguarding. The safeguarding service has a dedicated member of staff who can advise and support you in

situations where it has been identified that someone may pose a risk to others. The member of staff can help you with referrals of concern and with setting up and reviewing Covenants of Responsibility.

Information and Contact details for Safeguarding Issues

The Church of Scotland website hosts a number of Safeguarding Handbooks covering the wide range of work covered by the Safeguarding Service. They can be found at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/safeguarding_service/key-publications

All members of the safeguarding team can be contacted by e-mail at safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk or by telephoning 0131 240 2256.

Place for Hope

Place for Hope accompanies people and equips people and faith communities so that all might reach their potential to be peace makers. They work closely with the Church of Scotland and offer three kinds of support to groups and individuals: facilitated conversations, help in a crisis and coaching. They can be contacted by phone on 07884 580 359, by post at 272 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4JR, or via the contact form on their website: www.placeforhope.org.uk.

The Communications Department ('Comms')

The Church of Scotland's Communications Department is responsible for liaising with the media, design services, social media and the Church's website. The department is made up of three sections: the Media Team, the Design Team and the Web Team.

The Media Team facilitates quick and effective liaison between the Church and the print and broadcast media. They respond to numerous phone calls daily from journalists looking for information or comments about Church-related subjects and matters of national or international importance. News releases are issued throughout the year to newspapers, magazines, television newsrooms and radio stations on a range of topics, current issues or news items. The team also offers guidance and support on proactive and reactive media work to ministers and Church officials.

The Design Team provides a high-quality design, layout and print management service to the Church of Scotland, producing many of its publications, leaflets and magazines.

The Web Team is responsible for maintaining and developing the Church's main website, and updating the information which comes from the Church's councils, committees and departments.

The Media Team can be contacted 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 0131 225 5722. Out of hours: 07854 783 539. For all other contact details in the Comms department please visit the Comms page on the Church's website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/contact_us/media_centre

Law Dept

The Church of Scotland's Law Department acts in legal matters for the organisation and all of its courts, councils, committees, the General Trustees, the Church of Scotland Trust and the Investors Trust. The department also acts for individual congregations and is available to give advice on any legal matter arising. The Law Department cannot advise or act for ministers as individuals, but they can give advice to relating to congregations or trusts where you are a trustee by virtue of your office as minister.

To contact the Law Department, please email lawdept@churchofscotland.org.uk or phone 0131 225 5722. You can also visit the department's page on the Church website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/councils_committees_and_departments/committees/central_services_committee/law_department or search for 'law' on the Resources page of the Ascend website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

Further Information

The Ascend website provides more information about Church of Scotland policies, and departments, as well as about key external agencies and partners. Please see the Essential Information and Resources pages of the website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend

If you can't find what you're looking for or are not sure where to look, please contact us:
ascend@churchofscotland.org.uk

Appendix: Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland

Applicability of the Code

The Code applies to all those serving in the recognised ministries of the Church of Scotland. Throughout the Code, the terms 'ministry' and 'recognised ministries' shall include ordained ministers, deacons and readers, and all paid employees in parish appointments, as defined in section 16(1) and 16(1)(a) of Act VII 2003.

Scope of the Code

The Code sets out the standards of conduct expected by the General Assembly. The Code is not intended to be an expansion or amplification of Act III 2001 anent Discipline of Ministers, Licentiates, Graduate Candidates and Deacons (as amended by Acts III and IX 2002, III 2003, X 2004, III 2005, XVI 2006, I and II 2007, VII 2008, I 2009, III 2010, III 2011 and VI 2012), and should not be regarded as containing an authoritative or exhaustive list of disciplinary offences. Presbyteries must always have primary regard to the terms of the Church's legislation, but are entitled to have regard to the terms of the Code in making their own assessment of the adequacy of conduct. The Code complements the policies and rules set out in the Ministers' and Employees Handbooks which cover such matters as balance of duties, absence, maternity and paternity leave, holiday arrangements, health and safety, discrimination, bullying and harassment. In addition the Code can be used:

- as a basis for education programmes to support good practice;
- as a document to reassure the public that all those serving in recognised ministries of the Church of Scotland are provided with a framework of standards and accountability
- as a framework for analysing concerns and defining problems about conduct in all aspects of church life and work.

The Code is not a substitute for reflective and ethically disciplined practice, continuing learning and development, and regular supervision. Equally the Code is not to be used as a measure of ministerial capability. Such issues are matters for review under others headings such as accompanied review, support and development, further training, etc.

An ethical basis for the Code

The Church is concerned with the spiritual care, nurture and wellbeing of women, men, and children both within and outwith the membership of the Church of Scotland. Those engaged in the ministries of the Church of Scotland (as defined above) have ethical obligations in the way they carry out their ministry. These obligations prohibit harm and promote the good of the person. The context of ministry is one in which people are often vulnerable and in need of support. Establishing appropriate boundaries fosters trust, helps to clarify ethical actions and enables the relationships involved in ministry to function effectively.

Ministry usually proceeds without any explicit agreement. It takes place wherever there is need and it is often unplanned. Even in a caring relationship, however, there is also a possibility that attempting to do good may result in a degree of harm, and that in helping others, those involved in ministry may be fulfilling a personal need. Therefore in deciding what to do in any particular situation, those involved in ministry need to be able to exercise ethical reasoning and deliberation in order to justify their actions.

1. General Conduct

Those serving in the recognised ministries of the Church of Scotland are responsible for their personal and ministerial conduct and must be able to justify their actions and practice to those in their care and to colleagues. In particular they should:

- act at all times in ways that promote trust and confidence in their profession;
- act at all times to promote and safeguard the interests and wellbeing of those to whom they minister

- affirm the equal dignity and worth of those to whom they minister
- act with integrity and with due respect for diversity and differences including, but not limited to, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability
- maintain good standing in the Church of Scotland
- ensure that their conduct is consistent with their profession and appropriate to the setting in which they work.

2. Relationships between those in ministry and those they minister to

Relationships have the capacity to be nurturing and healing, but they also have the potential to be damaging and destructive. An important reason for this is the intrinsic imbalance of power in the relationship. Those involved in ministry, therefore, should be aware of issues of power and should exercise any perceived power with sensitivity, discernment and within ethical boundaries. Those involved in ministry will seek to develop appropriate pastoral and supportive relationships within the whole people of God and with those to whom ministry is freely offered. The primary focus will be meeting the needs of those being ministered to; in this it may be appropriate to express our own vulnerability; but it would be an abuse of a pastoral relationship for those in ministry to use it to meet their own needs.

3. Maintaining Trust

Ministry is both a privilege and a responsibility and those involved in ministry need to establish boundaries that enable trust and safeguard ethical relationships with those to whom they minister. In particular those involved in ministry should:

- behave in ways that honour the dignity and value of those to whom they minister
- ensure as far as possible that no action or omission on their part and within their sphere of responsibility could be detrimental to the wellbeing of those to whom they minister
- respect the trust established with those to whom they minister, while understanding the limits of confidentiality
- respect the autonomy of those to whom they minister
- recognise and act within the limits of their competence
- maintain clear boundaries in the areas of self-disclosure, intimacy and sexuality
- avoid any conflicts of interest; but in the event that the person involved in ministry has to withdraw on the grounds of conscience or ethical principles, endeavour to refer to someone else who can facilitate the transfer and continuity of ministry.

4. Respecting Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a condition of trust that enables people to seek help at a time of need and to talk about personal, private and secret matters relevant to their spiritual health and wellbeing. Ministry often involves access to confidential information. Those engaged in ministry, therefore, must respect confidences, and in particular they should:

- respect the right of individuals to control access to their own personal information and to limit its disclosure
- establish the boundaries of confidentiality with those to whom they minister and respect as far as possible the limitations of disclosure that an individual can reasonably expect or request
- treat information about those to whom they minister as confidential and use it only for the purposes for which it was given
- guard against breaches of confidentiality by protecting information from improper disclosure at all times
- ensure that confidential information is not disclosed to a third party unless there are clear grounds for disclosure including: (1) the consent of the individual; (2) the public interest, particularly where there is a risk of harm or self-harm; (3) and in accordance with an order of a court or other public body that has

jurisdiction. In this regard particular attention is drawn to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Church's Safeguarding Service's Safeguarding Handbook 1, June 2011 which contains the Code of Good Safeguarding Practice for Kirk Sessions and Congregations in the Church of Scotland;

- discuss with those to whom they minister reasons why disclosing confidential information to other persons might be of benefit to the provision of good care
- uphold the absolute confidentiality of information disclosed.

5. Abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and legal rights by any other person or persons. It is behaviour that is a clear departure from the ethical conduct required of us all. It can result from a misuse of power or a betrayal of trust, respect or intimacy which causes harm or exploitation. It can be caused by purposeful or negligent actions as well as a failure to act where a duty exists. The main forms of abuse include spiritual, physical, psychological, verbal, sexual, and financial, and are defined here in the context of Christian ministry:

- Spiritual abuse is the imposition of values and beliefs on those to whom we minister; and while mission is part of the work of ministry, it is an abuse to fail to respect the freedom of those to whom we minister to make choices for themselves
- Physical abuse is any form of physical contact which is likely to cause distress, pain or bodily harm
- Psychological abuse is behaviour by a person in ministry which is exploitative, inappropriately manipulative, coercive or intimidating
- Verbal abuse is spoken remarks by a person in ministry which are disrespectful, humiliating, intimidating or harmful to those to whom they minister
- Sexual abuse is forcing, coercing or inducing any person to whom we minister to establish or pursue a sexual or improper emotional relationship and also the passing of hurtful remarks of a sexual nature
- Financial or material abuse is the misappropriation of a person's money or assets by those involved in ministry through fraud or deception; or through misuse of a person's assets or money while having a legitimate access to them.

Though these definitions do not constitute any part of the specific terms of Act III 2001, the General Assembly believes that any Presbytery would be very likely to institute proceedings in terms of the Act upon receiving notice of circumstances indicating that such abuse may have been committed.

6. The Use of Touch

Touch is a basic human gesture and physical contact is an integral part of wellbeing. Touch conveys to many people reassurance, care and concern and it can be a valuable expression of a supportive or therapeutic relationship. But touch is not value-free, it is conditioned by social and cultural norms and it can convey powerful signals. Therefore touch may be perceived as threatening or manipulative, it could be physically painful and it can be a form of abuse.

People use touch informally as a gesture of care and formally within rituals to signify beliefs and theological actions. However, because the use of touch can be misunderstood or misinterpreted, or it may be unwanted, particular sensitivity should be exercised and assumptions about gender and personal space carefully considered. If in any doubt as to whether touch may be acceptable, permission should be obtained. The use of ritual that involves touch should be carefully explained and permission obtained.

7. Working with Colleagues

Working in ministry often depends on collaboration with colleagues both in other ministries and in other disciplines. In particular those in ministry should:

- respect the skills, contributions and integrity of colleagues
- work in a collaborative and co-operative manner with colleagues and communicate effectively with them within the limits of confidentiality

- respect the boundaries of other parishes, and take care not to undertake pastoral or sacramental duties within another parish for anyone other than a member of the congregation in which they minister. The recognised exceptions are (1) the conduct of a marriage or a funeral by private invitation and (2) circumstances in which the express permission of the minister of the other parish has been secured.
- participate in the work of multidisciplinary teams they are members of and respect their confidentiality
- challenge colleagues who appear to have behaved unethically or in contravention of this Code. In addition be prepared to bring concerns of misconduct to those charged with responsibility for colleagues.

8. Probity in Practice

The office of a recognised ministry in the Church of Scotland requires the highest standards of moral integrity and honesty. In particular those involved in ministry must:

- be honest and accurate in representing their professional affiliations, qualifications, and experience, and not make unjustifiable claims about their competence
- distinguish between pastoral care and formal counselling and ensure that those to whom they minister understand the form of support being offered
- not charge individuals personal fees for baptisms, weddings or funerals: in all circumstances ministers should follow the guidelines contained in the Year Book in respect of charging for weddings and funerals.
- refrain from encouraging inappropriately those to whom they minister to give, lend or bequeath money or gifts which will be of a direct or indirect benefit to themselves, or put pressure on those to whom they minister to make donations
- manage any finances for which they are responsible with diligence and for the purpose for which they are intended
- declare any involvement that might cause a conflict of interest
- demonstrate honesty and objectivity when providing references for colleagues or completing and signing forms. Reasonable steps must be taken to verify any statement before they sign a document, and they must not write or sign documents which are false or misleading.

9. Dealing with Misconduct

There is a wide range of behaviour that contravenes the boundaries of ministry and which constitutes misconduct including:

- failure to meet the standards of the Church of Scotland in respect of matters of Life and Doctrine
- failure to fulfil the obligations expected of an office bearer or the contractual obligations as an employee
- infringement of the disciplinary rules of the church courts or employer, including professional misconduct;
- wilful, careless, inappropriate or unethical behaviour likely to compromise the standards of a professional ministry;
- committing criminal offences in particular circumstances outside the place of work

Professional misconduct is conduct that contravenes the standards of professional behaviour required by the General Assembly.

10. Discipline

Presbytery is responsible for the disciplining of all Ministers and Deacons. Where allegations involving issues of professional conduct are raised, Presbytery must proceed to investigate in terms of Act III 2001 anent Discipline of Ministers, Licentiates, Graduate Candidates and Deacons (as amended by Acts III and IX 2002 and III 2003, X 2004, III 2005, XVI 2006 and I and II 2007).

Where an investigation establishes a suspected criminal action this must be reported to the police.

11. Special Note

Ministers who are working as Chaplains or others whose contracts are held by employers other than the Church of Scotland.

The Ministries Council is committed to the support and care of all ministers, deacons, chaplains and other church related staff who may be working for employers other than the Church of Scotland.

The Council recognises that such people who exercise ministries, but work for another employer, may feel, at times, that they fall out with the circle of support of the Church. The Council, through its Pastoral and Spiritual Care Task Group, has a remit to:

- oversee the delivery of pastoral care, as it is provided by members of staff of the Ministries Council, hear reports on general trends in the wellbeing of the ministries of the Church and, in the light of these, make recommendations to the Council on the development of pastoral and spiritual care;
- encourage best practice of pastoral and spiritual care in local presbytery networks and ensure good communication between those who support the ministries of the Church, both at local and national level; and develop a resource of people and centres which may be offered to individuals seeking spiritual direction or personal spiritual growth;
- deliver training and support for those engaged in the direct support of the ministries of the Church;

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For more information...

Tel: 0131 225 5722

Email: ministries@churchofscotland.org.uk

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121 George Street
Edinburgh, EH2 4YN

 facebook.com/churchofscotland

 [@churchscotland](https://twitter.com/churchscotland)

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/ascend