



The Church of Scotland

Ministries Support Services

Sick Leave for Ministers

Sick Leave

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 to the Ministries Council by email or post.

PLEASE let the Ministries Council know when you return to work after sick leave. It is important for your Income Protection (see further information below) that we have accurate records of sickness.

During a leave of absence

If you are on leave due to ill health and you are signed off by your GP you must not undertake any ministerial function or duty, except with the express permission of the Presbytery or appropriate health advisers. If you are still able to perform some of your duties then please discuss this with your GP and make sure your medical certificate states this clearly. You are not responsible for obtaining Pulpit Supply whilst you are off on sick leave, this is the responsibility of the Session Clerk and/or Presbytery.

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 the responsibility of Presbytery. More information, including the relevant form and contact details can be found here: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/ministries_resources

Support at times of Ill Health

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 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.

Please note that Unum reserves the right to medically assess individuals at regular intervals if they are in receipt of Income Protection Payments.