



MDS Staffing Request

Guidance Notes

September 2019

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SECTION 1: Introduction

The General Assembly of 2018 instructed the Ministries Council to report to the General Assembly of 2019 on the future affordability of Ministries Development Staff (MDS) posts beyond posts currently in Presbytery Plans and on reasons why almost 30% of MDS posts remain unfilled. At the General Assembly 2019, the Ministries Council reported that in 2018 the MDS budget was overspent by almost £300,000. As of February 2019, there were approximately 190 FTE (full time equivalent) MDS posts in Presbytery Plans and the Ministries Council budget for 2019 allows for 120 FTE posts. Should every post in the Presbytery Plans be filled in 2019, this would present a shortfall of funding for approximately 70 FTE MDS posts, which would represent an annual and ongoing cost of over £2.5 million. Therefore, the Council would like to work with Presbyteries to review MDS posts in plans – particularly those not recruited to – to see how many MDS posts are required now and in the future and thereby inform future budgeting of MDS posts.

The General Assembly of 2019 approved the temporary pause on recruitment and instructed the Ministries Council to implement a process for allowing the maximum sustainable number of MDS posts to be filled.

This guidance document aims to advise congregations and Presbyteries of the MDS Staffing Request procedure.

For further information please contact the Ministries Council on 0131 225 5722 ext 2205

Each one of us does the work which the Lord gave him to do: I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow... There is no difference between the one who plants and the one who waters; God will reward each one according to the work each has done. For we are partners working together for God, and you are God's field.

1st Corinthians 3:5-6, 8-9 (GNB)

KEY DOCUMENTS

MDS Staffing Request Flowchart – see Appendix 1

The infograph details the various stages of the MDS Staffing Request to aid with planning and communication expectations.

MDS Staffing Request Key Dates – see Appendix 2

The Key Dates document details the various deadlines and key dates, to aid with planning and communication expectations. Wherever possible these dates will be adhered to, but may be subject to change without notice if required.

Notification of Meeting – National Offices inform Presbyteries if there is MDS budget to apply for. Where there is not, applications will not be received.

Submission Deadline – MDS Staffing Request Form and related documents to be received by email to mdsapproval@churchofscotland.org.uk

MDS Staffing Committee – Applications are considered by MDS Staffing Approval Panel.

Outcome Relayed – National Offices advise Presbytery of MDS Staffing Approval Panel outcome.

MDS Staffing Request Form – Appendix 3

All sections must be completed locally, with final sign-off by the Presbytery Clerk.

Presbytery Plan Post

All requests being made must be for an MDS role on a current Presbytery Plan that has been concurred with by the PPTG.

FTE

This is the full time equivalent of the post, with 37.5 hours being full time. So, if it is a half time post it is 0.5 FTE/18.75 hours, and so on. The FTE of your MDS post will be detailed on the Presbytery Plan allocation for your congregation.

SECTION 2: Salary Scale

There are 4 salary scales for MDS roles. HR can advise on the appropriate scale for your post.

- MDS – our most common scale for parish assistant/community workers/family, youth and children workers/development workers etc.
- Team Leader – where the post holder either line manages other MDS colleagues or the complexity and level of responsibility and accountability is significant.
- Deacon – where an ordained Deacon is required.
- Associate Minister – where an ordained minister of word and sacrament is essential.

SECTION 3: Job Title and Description

HR are available to work with you on job descriptions, assisting as they are drawn up. **See Appendix 4.** These are the kinds of considerations that need to be taken into account:

3.1 Overall Purpose of Post

- What is the overall objective of the post?
- What work is already going on in this area of work?
- If the post is operating as you want it, what would that look like?

3.2 Reporting Structure

- Who is line managing this post? Have they experience of line management/team working?
- Is this person having day-to-day responsibility for the role, or a more general oversight?
- What are the expectations in terms of team meetings/workload planning?
- Are there other people who will be feeding into the work of the role?
- How will the success of the role be monitored and evaluated?
- Outwith team meetings, is there an expectation of reports to Kirk Session/Presbytery?

3.3 Key Duties & Responsibilities

- What duties are you expecting this role to cover?
- How much of their time will be spent in each of these areas?
- How do you view a typical working week for the role?
- How is the work split between core, fundamental work and specific pieces of work/projects?
- Are there other areas of work they would be expected to help out in?
- What decisions are they expected to make?

- Who will the post holder be working/interacting with as part of their job?

3.4 Person Specification

- Are there any qualifications required for the job? Is this essential or desirable? Why?
- Is there specific knowledge that is required?
- Is there any experience the post holder must have? Consider experience in specific environments, tools, techniques, practices and exposures.
- What kinds of skills and abilities are required for the role? What can be learned/developed?
- What are the personal qualities and gifts you need someone to bring to the role?
- What Christian commitment is required? A person who attends church and has a live church connection, or somebody who can work within the Christian ethos of the CofS?

3.5 Other

- What are the expectations around participation in congregational life? eg are they required to have the Sunday service as part of their working week/is it hoped they worship in the congregation? In terms of being around the congregation, is this part of their role, or a hope that they do this at a personal level?
- What is your expectation around the working pattern of the role? Days of the week/evenings/weekends. Are there certain days/times the post holder will be required to work?
- How much travel is involved in the post? Is a car required? If there is local public transport, is this available at all the times the post holder will need it, eg evenings?

SECTION 4: Safer Recruitment

The Safeguarding Service provides guidance on Safe Recruitment and, while HR will advise on PVG Membership, it is important that the guidance has been read and understood and the local situation is compliant with the guidance.

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/safeguarding_service/safe_recruitment

SECTION 5: Line Management

An appropriate line manager – not necessarily the minister – must be identified, who is willing and committed to working with an MDS colleague and carrying out the role of line manager. This involves setting the vision for the work, assisting in planning and organising work, setting objectives and measuring progress, identifying development needs and carrying out an annual appraisal. The line manager must be able to give time to this role, communicating and meeting regularly. With support of HR and staff within Ministries Council, the line manager will also take responsibility for day to day issues such as sickness absence, performance, conduct and authorising time off. Where the charge is in vacancy, consider whether there is sufficient support in place to enable an MDS to succeed in the role.

Ministries Council regularly offer line management training and it is expected that line managers attend.

SECTION 6: Resources

6.1 Work Base

A suitable work base must be identified (which could be home based) for the post holder, with consideration given to safety, security, temperature and comfort. Consideration also needs to be given to phone/internet access.

6.2 Equipment

It is the local responsibility to provide and pay for furniture (eg desk and chair) for the MDS post holder, alongside a computer (laptop or PC), related IT items (eg a mouse, keyboard, Microsoft licences) and a mobile phone if needed.

If there are questions of affordability, these should be directed to the Ministries Council finance team at ministriesfinance@churchofscotland.org.uk

6.3 Expenses

It is the local responsibility to meet expenses relating to an MDS role. Mileage claims will be paid centrally through payroll, but recharged on a quarterly basis. All other expenses, eg public transport, materials required for the role, meeting refreshments, travel to training events and conferences etc, will be claimed and paid locally.

SECTION 7: Health and Safety

The Pre-Appointment Health & Safety Check-sheet for Field Based Employees must be completed and returned with the staffing request. **See Appendix 5.** Advice can be sought from the Central Properties Department staff if required.

SECTION 8: Request Details

8.1 Contribution of the Post

You should explain what it is this post is going to be doing that is not currently done/needs to continue and what will be the tangible outcomes from the role in terms of mission.

8.2 Criteria

You should share how this role meets the criteria of enabling mission to occur; new ministry initiatives and poverty focus.

8.3 Nine Principles of Planning as per Act V11 2003

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/7137/2003_Act_7_Appraisal_and_Adjustment.pdf

You should share how this role fulfils the Act.

SECTION 9: Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix 6 contains questions that we feel may help with the application process and understanding its reasoning. Should you have any questions *not* covered there, please feel free to email mdsapproval@churchofscotland.org.uk and we will add them, as this is intended to be a working document.