Guidelines for Congregations and Presbyteries Regarding

the Employment of Additional Pastoral Personnel

(Approved in March 2011 and updated in June 2012 and March 2019)

# Introduction

1. The landscape in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and in other denominations, has changed dramatically due to the changing nature of ministry with young people in particular, and changing demands on serving members of our congregations. Once only a ‘privileged few’ employed any kind of Additional Pastoral Personnel (APP). However this has changed and every year the Linkage Commission approves the creation of many new APP posts and the extension of existing posts. This has presented challenges to employers and employees alike and, although much has been learned, there are still situations of poor practice and congregations can find it difficult to negotiate the maze of legislation and procedures.
2. As a denomination PCI has responsibilities to respond to this changing climate in a manner which facilitates best practice without unnecessarily restricting congregations’ individual discretion and vision. This set of revised Guidelines, approved by the Linkage Commission and therefore carrying the authority of the General Assembly, seeks to set out clearly the steps which a Kirk Session needs to take as it considers the creation of APP posts within its congregation. These updated Guidelines bring together various sets of guidelines including ‘Guidelines for Kirk Sessions On General Employment Issues’, issued to all congregations in 2017 (see Appendix A). These Guidelines represent the current policy and practice which should be followed in all APP appointments.
3. Unlike Ordained Ministers, Deaconesses and Auxiliary Ministers who are ‘office holders’, APPs are employees of the Kirk Session. Therefore Kirk Sessions must comply with the requirements of current employment legislation. The HR support provider should be consulted for advice on all employment matters.
4. For posts which are primarily Word-based, Kirk Sessions should consider the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme. Details of that Scheme are available from the Convener of the Linkage Commission’s Additional Pastoral Personnel and Auxiliary Ministry Panel.

# Contacting the HR Support Provider

1. ‘Guidelines for Kirk Sessions On General Employment Issues’ includes a section which lists the services available to congregations from the HR support provider and makes clear the importance of following the advice of the provider.
2. The Convener of the Linkage Commission’s APPAM Panel should be contacted regarding the easiest way to make contact with the provider.

# Creating a Post

1. ‘Guidelines for Kirk Sessions On General Employment Issues’ includes a section on the steps to be followed to create a new post.
2. In addition, when a Kirk Session wishes to create a new APP post, it must seek the approval of Presbytery by submitting the four required documents (job description, personnel specification, draft advertisement, terms and conditions) to Presbytery using the Linkage Commission’s form ‘Request for the Approval of an APP Post’ (see Appendix D). The Kirk Session should also submit to Presbytery written confirmation from the HR support provider that the provider has approved the four required documents.
3. When it comes to the terms and conditions, all Kirk Sessions are required to follow the salary guidelines as agreed by the 2010 General Assembly (Reports, pages 98–101) and updated and published annually in the General Assembly Report Book. The latest scales are included in Appendix C and the APPAM Convener should be contacted for the most up to date figures and for advice on their interpretation. It should be noted that in a situation where accommodation is provided for the APP, a proportionate reduction in salary may be made if deemed appropriate. Consideration should be given to awarding an annual salary increment, although any series of incremental rises should only be up to the maximum point on the salary scale set within the terms of conditions of employment. A cost of living adjustment to the employee’s salary/salary scale should normally be considered each year.
4. When the creation of the post has been approved by Presbytery, the paperwork should be forwarded to the Convener of the Linkage Commission’s APPAM Panel for final approval. Please note that the paperwork must be with the Convener of the APPAM Panel at least two weeks prior to the monthly meeting of the Linkage Commission.
5. It should be clearly understood that a post should not be advertised in any way until Linkage Commission approval has been received.
6. Augmented congregations also require a statement from the Council for Mission in Ireland (CMI) in support of the missional merit of the post. An augmented congregation can contribute up to a maximum of 25% of the ministerial minimum from congregational givings (in a given year) towards the cost of an APP post. The remainder should come from other sources (grants etc.).
7. Kirk Sessions are strongly encouraged to avail of support from an appropriate Council as they engage in the employment process from designing the job description to interviewing and appointing the new employee. Appropriate advice may be obtained from, for example, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, the Council for Mission in Ireland, or the Council for Social Witness (see Appendix B for contact details).
8. Occasionally Presbyteries may wish to employ an APP. In such circumstances the Presbytery becomes the employer rather than a Kirk Session. These guidelines, with minor adjustment, are equally applicable to a Presbytery, including the necessity to seek Linkage Commission permission for the post. Reference throughout to “Kirk Session” should be replaced by reference to “Presbytery”.

# Making, Extending and Amending an Appointment

1. As the employer, it is the Kirk Session’s responsibility to appoint the interview panel. This panel may include individuals who are not members of Kirk Session, for example, a key youth leader within the congregation, and may also have assessors sit with it, for example, from a relevant Council or from Presbytery. It should be clearly agreed in advance as to whether this Panel has authority to make the actual appointment. This is the strongly recommended course.
2. All job applicants should be provided in advance with an information pack containing not only the approved job description, personnel specification and terms and conditions, but also giving clear information on the distinctive ethos of the congregation and the context of its mission and ministry. It is important that this should include reference to the doctrine and practice of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As the employer, it is the responsibility of the Kirk Session, through its interview panel, to ensure the preferred candidate makes an informed commitment to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and to work within the aims and ethos of the specific congregation. It is also important that during the process of application and interview applicants should be given sufficient opportunity to demonstrate an active Christian faith.
3. It is important to be clear that when a job offer is made, it is conditional on a satisfactory Access NI Check for jobs in Northern Ireland or Garda Vetting Check for jobs in the Republic of Ireland. The Taking Care Office of the Council for Social Witness should be contacted to facilitate the processing of the appropriate check.
4. Kirk Sessions are reminded that they must act in accordance with legislation when they desire to extend or amend any contract. For an extension, the Session is normally required to issue either a new contract or a letter of extension to the existing contract. The HR support provider can advise on which is required and can provide templates on request. The approval of the Presbytery and Linkage Commission is also required when a Kirk Session desires to extend or amend an existing post using the Linkage Commission’s form ‘Request for Extension or Amendment of an Existing APP Post’ (see Appendix E).

# Commissioning Service

1. Ideally all APPs should be commissioned at a service of public worship in the congregation where they are to serve.
2. This service should be conducted by the Minister of the congregation with representatives of Presbytery present where appropriate.
3. The form of service should be similar to that laid down for the commissioning of deaconesses and others (Code Par. 202).
4. Neither formal subscription to the Confession nor the laying on of hands should be practiced.
5. The Right Hand of Fellowship should be given by the Minister and the Clerk of Session.
6. The Questions to the Candidate should be as follows or similar:
   1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and do you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord?
   2. Do you believe the Word of God as found in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
   3. So far as you know your own heart, are love for the Lord Jesus Christ and a desire to assist others to follow Him your chief motives for accepting this opportunity for service?
   4. Do you promise, relying on divine grace, to walk worthy of the Lord, to be loyal to the teaching and practice of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to discharge your duties faithfully and diligently, and at all times to seek to further the Kingdom of God?

# Towards Best Practice

1. ‘Guidelines for Kirk Sessions On General Employment Issues’ contains helpful information regarding: the supervision of an employee; conflict of interest; Capability, Disciplinary and Grievance Issues; and Salaries and Expenses.
2. In addition, the employee should be encouraged to make contact with the appropriate PCI Council as a source of relevant support and training (for example, from the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, the Council for Mission in Ireland, or the Council for Social Witness).
3. It is good practice for APPs to be invited by Kirk Sessions to sit and deliberate in Session meetings when matters relating to their area of work are discussed, except if business relates to their employment. They should also be asked to report in person to Kirk Session on at least an annual basis.

# Summary of Steps to Create a New Post

1. Always seek and follow the advice of the HR support provider.
2. Draw up the four required documents (job description, personnel specification, terms and conditions, and draft advertisement) using templates available from the Convener of the Linkage Commission’s APPAM Panel.
3. Ensure the proposed salary corresponds to the Linkage Commission’s Recommended Salary Scales.
4. Submit the four main documents to the HR support provider for written confirmation of approval.
5. Submit Appendix D and the four main documents plus the HR support provider’s written confirmation to Presbytery for approval.
6. Once Presbytery approval has been received, forward the same paperwork to the Convener of the Linkage Commission’s APPAM Panel for final approval from the Commission.

# Summary of Steps to Extend an Existing Post

1. Always seek and follow the advice of the HR support provider.
2. Prepare either a letter of extension to the existing contract or a new contract. The HR support provider can advise on which is needed and can provide templates on request.
3. Submit the letter of extension/new contract to the HR support provider for written confirmation of approval.
4. Submit Appendix E and the letter of extension/new contract plus the HR support provider’s written confirmation to Presbytery for approval.
5. Once Presbytery approval has been received, forward the same paperwork to the Convener of the Linkage Commission’s APPAM Panel for final approval from the Commission.

Appendix A

Guidelines for Kirk Sessions  
On General Employment Issues

# Introduction

1. The General Council agreed and reported to the 2016 General Assembly that the Linkage Commission should draw up guidance for Kirk Sessions on general employment issues. The Linkage Commission hopes these guidelines will be of help to Kirk Sessions and directs all Kirk Sessions to follow them.
2. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the *Guide to Recruiting Local Church Employees*, available from our HR support provider. Kirk Sessions should also note that there are separate guidelines regarding the employment of Additional Pastoral Personnel which are available from the Convener of the APPAM Panel of the Linkage Commission.

# HR Support Provision

1. The General Assembly has appointed an HR support provider who is able to offer the following services to congregations:
   1. 24-hour telephone advice service;
   2. online support;
   3. training for Kirk Sessions and congregations;
   4. sample documents which can be customised to fit each post;
   5. advice dependent indemnity insurance cover.
2. Kirk Sessions, being the employer of any congregational employee, are required by the General Assembly to seek employment advice from the HR support provider and to follow it. Failure to consult the HR support provider may result in loss of indemnity cover. The HR support provider should always be consulted when creating a post, changing the terms and conditions or job description of an existing post, or when ending an existing post. The HR support provider should also be consulted when in doubt about any other employment matters.
3. In exceptional cases, the Clerk of Assembly is able to authorise the involvement of PCI’s Head of Personnel to liaise with the HR support provider and/or to assess if legal input is needed.

# Creating a Post

1. The Kirk Session should work through the following steps when creating a post:
2. Clarify the nature of the post.
3. Choose a suitable job title to describe broadly the nature of the post.
4. A job description should be drawn up using the appropriate PCI template, available from the HR support provider.
   1. This should clearly outline the aim and vision of the post and the structure of accountability to the Kirk Session.
   2. Where the Personnel Specification requires that the successful candidate be a Christian (see point 5 below), the job description must clearly list all spiritual duties of the post, as this will demonstrate why a Christian is required. This would apply for posts such as music co-ordinator posts, pastoral posts, and similar, but not for cleaners, administrators or similar, where the legislation would not normally allow a Christian faith to be an essential requirement.
   3. Job descriptions should be clear and unambiguous with a realistic workload so that the employee clearly understands the role.
5. A Personnel Specification should be drawn up using the appropriate PCI template, available from the HR support provider, clearly defining the essential and desirable criteria for the post.
   1. For posts in Northern Ireland, where the nature of the post requires that the successful candidate be a Christian, this can be listed as one of the essential criteria in the Personnel Specification. In doing so the following statement should also be included in the Personnel Specification: ‘The essential nature of this post requires that the successful candidate be a Christian as provided for under excepted occupations in Fair Employment Treatment (NI) order 1998.’
   2. For posts in the Republic of Ireland such a statement is not required, but again the job description must clearly show the spiritual duties to be fulfilled (e.g. to lead prayer and worship, to disciple others and so on).
6. Terms and conditions should be drawn up using the appropriate PCI template, available from the HR support provider. These include the agreed standard terms and conditions for employees as well as core policies and procedures. Core policies and procedures include, for example: an Equal Opportunities Policy; a Child Protection Policy; a Health, Safety and Welfare Policy; Absence Notification Policy; Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave; a Capability and Capability Dismissal Procedure; a Disciplinary Procedure; and a Grievance Procedure. Templates for these are available from the HR support provider.
7. The terms and conditions should also state the salary for the post and the level of expenses to be paid.
8. A suitable draft advertisement for the post should also be drawn up.
9. At this stage all documentation referred to above should be submitted to the HR support provider for approval. Written confirmation of this approval should be requested.

# Supervision of an Employee

1. The Kirk Session is responsible for line management arrangements for all staff. A Line Manager would normally be an elder, but may be a communicant member with the appropriate skills and availability to provide adequate supervision and support to the employee. The Minister may be the Line Manager.
2. The Line Manager should be familiar with the terms and conditions of employment including the core policies and procedures and should ensure these policies and procedures are followed.
3. The Line Manager should ensure the employee has received a copy of the terms and conditions including core policies and procedures.
4. The Line Manager should also ensure the employee has received a copy of the job description.
5. It is good practice for employment matters ­– such as formal capability, disciplinary and grievance issues – to be delegated to a small group appointed by the Session to handle such matters. This group may be composed of elders, but may also include communicant members with the appropriate skills. The Line Manager could also be part of this group unless, for example, a grievance has been raised in relation to the Line Manager. The Minister and Clerk of Session would normally be appointed as ex officio members. The group must ensure that it follows the relevant capability, disciplinary and grievance policies and procedures that are in place.
6. The employee should receive suitable pastoral support from someone other than the Line Manager.

# Conflict of Interest

1. When a Kirk Session is discussing employment matters, conflict of interest should become an item on the agenda to enable any elder to declare a possible conflict of interest. It is good practice for anyone with a conflict of interest to withdraw from the meeting while the discussion takes place. The same applies for any meeting of the group appointed by the Session to handle staffing matters.
2. With the exception of the Moderator, all remunerated staff who are elders should not be present whenever any employment matter is being discussed by the Session, even when their own employment is not under consideration.
3. It is good practice for employees to be invited by Kirk Sessions to sit and deliberate in Session meetings when matters relating to their area of work are discussed, but not if the business relates to employment matters.

# Capability, Disciplinary and Grievance Issues

1. Kirk Sessions are reminded to consult the HR support provider when dealing with a capability, disciplinary or grievance issues. Their advice can ensure that such issues are dealt with appropriately.
2. With the exception of allegations of major or gross misconduct, which must always be handled formally, those involved when other issues arise are encouraged to try to resolve the problem in an informal way. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a written record.
3. The following applies when informal discussion cannot resolve the problem. The Kirk Session, or the group appointed by the Session to handle staffing matters, should ensure that the appropriate procedure is followed.
   1. A procedure for dealing with capability issues is set out in an appendix to the terms and conditions of employment and these should be followed when necessary. The procedure includes the employee’s right to appeal any action taken against him/her.
   2. A procedure for dealing with an allegation of misconduct by the employee is set out in an appendix to the terms and conditions of employment and these should be followed when necessary. The procedure includes an investigation of the allegation, a hearing, and the employee’s right to appeal any action taken against him/her.
   3. A procedure for dealing with an employee’s grievance is set out in an appendix to the terms and conditions of employment and these should be followed when necessary. The procedure includes a meeting to investigate the grievance which the employee has raised and the employee’s right to appeal the decision.
4. Once the capability, disciplinary or grievance process is complete, the outcome should be reported to the Kirk Session.
5. Since these issues are the responsibility of the Kirk Session as the employer, Presbytery should not be involved unless the Session wishes to invite the Presbytery to nominate a suitably qualified person or persons to assist in the process.

# Salaries and Expenses

1. The employee’s salary should be paid on a monthly basis directly into the employee’s bank account.
2. Expenses should also be paid on a monthly basis.
3. There should be a defined budget for programme expenses, distinct from the employee’s personal expenses.
4. The employee should have an annual appraisal of the post using a structured scheme that allows both the employee and employer to review progress in different areas of the job. A guide for conducting an appraisal is available from the HR support provider.
5. When drawing up the terms and conditions of employment, it is permissible to include a salary scale in order to award an annual salary increment. Any series of incremental rises should only be up to the maximum point on the salary scale set within the terms and conditions of employment.
6. A cost of living adjustment to the employee’s salary/salary scale should normally be considered each year.

Appendix B: Useful Contacts

# Linkage Commission (Additional Pastoral Personnel)

Rev Brian McManus Rev David Allen

APPAM Convener Deputy Clerk

53 Rosses Lane Assembly Buildings

Ballymena BT42 2SB Belfast BT1 6DW

028 2565 8987 028 9032 2284

bmcmanus@presbyterianireland.org deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org

# Council for Congregational Life and Witness

Graeme Thompson Ruth Bromley

Youth Development Officer Children’s Development Officer

Assembly Buildings Assembly Buildings

Belfast BT1 6DW Belfast BT1 6DW

clw@presbyterianireland.org clw@presbyterianireland.org

# Council for Social Witness

Dermot Parsons Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin

CSW Secretary Head of Safeguarding

Assembly Buildings Assembly Buildings

Belfast BT1 6DW Belfast BT1 6DW

csw@presbyterianireland.org takingcare@presbyterianireland.org

# Council for Mission in Ireland

Mr Rick Hill Mrs Philippa Florit

CMI Secretary Mission Support Officer (Partnerships)

Assembly Buildings Assembly Buildings

Belfast BT1 6DW Belfast BT1 6DW

cmi@presbyterianireland.org pmccracken@presbyterianireland.org

# Appendix C: Recommended Salary Scales 2024

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Sterling salary point | Euro salary point | Level of responsibility of post | Qualification attained by employee or level of experience |
| Band A | 1. £22,308 2. £22,671 3. £23,034 4. £23,806 5. £24,788 6. £25,557 | 1. €31,769 2. €32,908 3. €34,057 4. €35,199 5. €36,653 6. €37,811 | Mostly direct work with children, young people or adults under close regular supervision; low management responsibility for people or projects. | Obtained or working towards OCN level 2&3 qualifications, PCI Youth/Children’s Ministry Course or similar qualification in the relevant field. Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent. |
| Band B | 1. £26,798 2. £28,057 3. £29,269 4. £30,566 5. £31,451 | 1. €39,625 2. €41,423 3. €43,279 4. €45,194 5. €46,501 | General responsibility for specific areas of programme and ministry oversight; graduating to less closely supervised responsibility for programmes, strategy, volunteers or leaders. | Appropriate recognition of attainment or working towards undergraduate or postgraduate theological study or professional qualifications (including Youth & Community, teaching qualification or other related professional qualifications such as counselling or social work). Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent. |

|  |
| --- |
| A Responsibility Allowance of up to 5.5% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum may be paid for those APP posts where a Kirk Session agrees there is a need to recognise the additional supervisory nature of a particular post. |

# Please Note

1. This salary scale was initially based on the JNC Youth and Community work scale (2009) for the UK and has since been updated annually. For 2024, the NI salary scale has been increased in line with the increase in the NI ministerial minimum (5% for 2024) except points A1 and A2 which have been increased to comply with UK minimum wage and to maintain six points in the Band. The ROI salary scale has been increased in line with the increase in the ROI ministerial minimum (5% for 2024).
2. The above rates are deemed to apply to a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. For employees working less than 37.5 hours per week a pro-rata rate is applicable.
3. The APPAM Panel Convener of the Linkage Commission should be contacted for the most up to date figures and for advice on their interpretation.

# Appendix D: Request for Approval for a New APP Post

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Congregation  Is this congregation in augmentation? Yes/No | | | Presbytery | |
| Proposed Job Title:  Proposed hours per week and length of contract:  Proposed salary (Band and Point from Recommended Salary Scales):   * All pre-approved, receipted expenses will be reimbursed on a monthly basis. * Other arrangement for expenses (give details) * Mileage rate (if required) | | | | |
| **Documentation Checklist:** Use the ‘Notes’ column for dates when approval was received or for highlighting any other matters. The ‘Tick’ column is to confirm that each task is complete before submitting the form and copies of documents 1 to 5 to Presbytery. | | | | |
|  | **Requirements** | **Notes (relevant dates, etc)** | | **Complete?** |
| 1 | Job Description |  | |  |
| 2 | Personnel Specification |  | |  |
| 3 | Terms and Conditions |  | |  |
| 4 | Draft Advertisement |  | |  |
| 5 | Approved by HR support provider |  | |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Signed on behalf of Kirk Session: (Moderator/Clerk) |
| Approved by the Presbytery of  Date approval given:  Signed: (Clerk) |
| **Submission of form:** This form, along with copies of all documents 1–5 above, should be forwarded to the Convener of the APPAM Panel, to arrive at least two weeks prior to the stated meeting of the Linkage Commission: Rev. Brian McManus, 53 Rosses Lane, Ballymena, BT42 2SB. Tel: +44 (0)28 2565 8987. Email: bmcmanus@presbyterianireland.org. |

|  |
| --- |
| For office use |

Appendix E: Request for Extension or Amendment of an Existing APP Post

(Only to be used when a current APP is in post and a Kirk Session is seeking permission to amend or extend the post beyond the period for which permission had previously been granted by the Linkage Commission.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Congregation: | Presbytery: |
| Job Title of Existing Post:  Date Existing Post Concludes:  Period of Extension Requested:  Date approval of HR support provider to extend post received:  Starting Salary: Current Salary:  Have there been any changes to the Job Description? Yes/No  Have there been any changes to the Terms and Conditions? Yes/No  **Note:** If you have answered Yes to either or both of these questions, please forward details of the changes when submitting this form to Presbytery. | |
| Any additional comments: | |

|  |
| --- |
| Signed on behalf of Kirk Session: (Moderator/Clerk) |
| Approved by the Presbytery of  Date approval given:  Signed: (Clerk) |
| **Submission of form:** This form, along with any new or amended documents and written confirmation of approval from the HR support provider, should be forwarded to the Convener of the APPAM Panel, to arrive at least two weeks prior to the stated meeting of the Linkage Commission: Rev. Brian McManus, 53 Rosses Lane, Ballymena, BT42 2SB. Tel: +44 (0)28 2565 8987. Email: bmcmanus@presbyterianireland.org. |

|  |
| --- |
| For office use |