

III MINISTRIES FOR DEAF CONGREGATIONS ACT (ACT III 2023)

Edinburgh, 23 May 2023, Session 9

The General Assembly enact and ordain as follows:

Congregations of Deaf People

1. There shall be Church of Scotland fellowships of Deaf People in the following regions:
 - Aberdeen and the North;
 - Edinburgh and the South East; and
 - Glasgow and the South West.
2. These fellowships shall individually be referred to in this Act as a “congregation” and together as the “congregations”. For the avoidance of doubt, there may be more than one fellowship within each region.
3. These congregations will not fall within the planning provisions of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).

Ministry for the congregations

4. In respect of each congregation, the Presbytery and the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team shall confer in making the appointment of a person to minister to the congregation (the “Ministry Appointee”). The Ministry Appointee shall be employed by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and shall be introduced by the Presbytery.
5. Persons eligible to be a Ministry Appointee shall be as follows:
 - (A) If a Minister, a person who:
 - (a) is a Minister as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (b) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in sections 12 to 14 of the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004);
 - OR**
 - (B) If a Deacon, a person who:
 - (c) is a Deacon as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (d) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in section 4 of the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010);
 - OR**
 - (C) If an Ordained Local Minister or an Auxiliary Minister, a person who:
 - (e) is an Ordained Local Minister or an Auxiliary Minister as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or a person who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (f) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in sections 10 and 11 of the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011);
 - OR**
 - (D) If a person who is not ordained (but subject to section 6 below), a person who:

- (g) is a member of the Church of Scotland in full communion or a member in good standing of a denomination mentioned in sub-sections 1(2), 1(3) or 1(4) of the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000);
- (h) has fulfilled as a minimum academic study equivalent to that specified in sections 10 and 11 of the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011);
- (i) has experience in participating in and leading worship in different congregational settings; and
- (j) has the ability to carry out effective and empathetic pastoral care;

AND, in all cases:

- (k) they shall possess communication skills to a level described by the National Occupational Standard CFALANG4.6, i.e. to “Understand Complex Signed Language in a Wide Range of Work Situations”, failing which they shall be a person who has attained communication skills to a level CFALANG4.5, i.e. to “Understand Extended Signed Language in a Wide Range of Familiar or Work Situations”, in which latter case they shall be appointed subject to a condition of working to improve signed language skills up to CFALANG4.6 within a specified timescale, the appropriate course or method being funded by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team; and
 - (l) they shall be able to demonstrate substantial and relevant recent experience of working with the deaf community.
6. If the Ministry Appointee is a person who is not ordained and who is thus unable to administer the sacraments, they shall ensure that suitable alternative arrangements are in place.
 7. For the avoidance of doubt, a Ministry Appointee in terms of this Act shall be restricted to that ministry, unless they are otherwise qualified to undertake other forms of ministry consistent with the Registration of Ministry Act (Act II 2017).
 8. Each Ministry Appointee shall be entitled to the appropriate membership of the relevant Presbytery and shall, if one exists and they are entitled to do so in terms of the Kirk Session Meetings Act (Act VI 2004), moderate the Kirk Session.

Presbytery membership

9. Each congregation shall be entitled to appoint a representative elder to the Presbytery within whose bounds the congregation is situated. Each Ministry Appointee who is eligible shall be a member of, and be subject to, the supervision of one Presbytery only. If not a member, the Ministry Appointee may be a Correspondent of the relevant Presbytery.

Presbytery Mission Initiative or Local Mission Church

10. It shall be open to the congregations to apply to the Presbytery of the bounds to be a Presbytery Mission Initiative in terms of the Presbytery Mission Initiatives Act (Act V 2015) or a Local Mission Church in terms of the Local Mission Church Regulations (Regs II 2021).

Deaf interpretation at Presbytery meetings

11. Presbyteries which have among them members from the congregations shall employ a suitably qualified interpreter as required at Presbytery meetings and shall not rely on the Ministry Appointee being themselves a member of Presbytery to fulfil this additional function. The cost of the interpreter shall be met by the Presbytery.

Congregational Finance

12. The salary of the Ministry Appointee shall be met from the budget of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team. Otherwise, each congregation shall be responsible for its own expenses. Where the congregation is not able to meet its expenses, it may seek support from the Presbytery in the first instance failing which the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

Superintendence of Presbytery and Church law and practice

13. The congregation shall be subject to the superintendence of the Presbytery and the law and practice of the Church of Scotland.

Repeals

14. The Ministry and Deaf Congregations Act (Act IX 2017) and the Congregations of Deaf People Regulations (Regs II 2017) are hereby repealed.