



Equalities Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

The Rodborough Tabernacle United Reformed Church (“the Church”) believes that all people are created in God’s image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God’s love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to prevent, reduce and stop all forms of unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) and to ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, benefits, pay, terms and conditions of employment, redundancy and dismissals are determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff based at Rodborough Tabernacle URC Tabernacle Walk, Rodborough, GL5 3UJ including individuals who occupy roles as stipendiary ministers of word and sacraments.

Procedure

Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of: race; sex; pregnancy and maternity; marital or civil partnership status; gender reassignment; disability; religion or beliefs; age; or sexual orientation. These nine “protected characteristics” are identified in the Act. Discrimination may be direct or indirect, and includes discrimination by perception and association.

Types of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats a person less favourably than another on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

Indirect Discrimination

This is the application of a policy, criterion or practice which the employer applies to all employees but is such that:

- it is it detrimental to a considerably larger proportion of people from the group that the person the employer is applying it to represents;
- the employer cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on a neutral basis; and
- the person to whom the employer is applying it suffers detriment from the application of the policy.

Harassment

This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have brought or intend to bring proceedings or they have given or intend to give evidence.

Unlawful Reasons for Discrimination

Sex

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of sex, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or transgender status. This applies to men, women and those undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment. Sexual harassment of men and women can be found to constitute sex discrimination.

Age

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. (This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.)

Disability

It is not permissible to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as much access to any services and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person.

Race

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic origin.

Sexual Orientation

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation. For example, an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because s/he is homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

Religion or Belief

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion or their lack of any religion or belief.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Church has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include:

- Re-allocating some or all of a disabled employee's duties;
- Transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their disability;
- Relocating a disabled employee to a more suitable office;
- Giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation;
- Providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee;
- Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees; or
- Any other adjustments that the Church considers reasonable and necessary provided such adjustments are within the financial means of the Church.

If an employee has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made by the Church, they should contact their Line Manager, Gill Malcolm.

Religion

The Church has identified some roles where there is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for a member of staff to be a practising Christian from churches of specific traditions.

Responsibility for the Implementation of this Policy

All staff of the Church are required to act in a way that does not subject any other member of staff, volunteer or visitor to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of their race, sex, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

The co-operation of all staff is essential for the success of this Policy. Senior staff are expected to follow this Policy and to ensure that all staff, subcontractors and agents do the same.

Staff may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by the Church and in some circumstances an Employment Tribunal may order them to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts.

The Church takes responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and endeavours to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.

Detriment

Any member of staff who believes that he/she has been subject to discrimination should discuss the matter with his/her line manager. If this does not resolve the matter, then he/she should use the Grievance Procedure.

For further guidance concerning this policy, staff should speak in confidence to the Minister or their Line Manager.

Consequences

For staff of the Church, failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Policy Owner

Any queries regarding this policy should be addressed to the Minister or the Church Secretary.

Policy Approved by

This policy was approved for use by Rodborough Tabernacle URC on 5 June 2024 and signed by the Church Secretary.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed after 36 months.