



The
United
Reformed
Church

Help and Advice Group

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

Bulletin 4: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The Group is made up of four members of local churches, together with administrative support from the Trust Officer. We are willing to try to provide specific advice or organise training days on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or wish to suggest a training or discussion event.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects of interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the members' area of the website with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Several churches have enquired about equal opportunities policies. The statement below was approved in 1994 by the General Assembly, and subsequently updated. All churches are encouraged to consider this statement, to pass one of their own, and to implement it in all areas of church life.

Introduction

The United Reformed 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.

Statement of Intent

The United Reformed Church affirms its commitment to show the same openness to all people in today's world. It intends in spirit and in deed to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all spheres of its activity and is committed to behaving as an equal opportunity organisation. It acknowledges that people are called to be diverse and lively, inclusive and flexible through the sharing of the gospel.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy Statement

Exclusion and discrimination can occur on many grounds including those recognised in law, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status and disability. The United Reformed Church seeks to eradicate less favourable treatment in these areas by endeavouring to:

- Build inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity and respect and have equality of opportunity to contribute their gifts to the common life;
- Identify and remove barriers to participation in employment, training, promotion, leadership and representation on church committees and in the attitudes and actions of every congregation;
- Take positive action to counter attitudes and practices contrary to this statement of intent;
- Define within the law where being of a particular religion or belief is or is not a requirement for any post within the church;
- Develop detailed policies to give effect to these requirements; and
- Monitor and report on progress in fulfilling these requirements.

This policy is the overarching equality and diversity direction of the United Reformed Church and should be read in conjunction with the United Reformed Church's declaration that it is a multicultural church and its equality policies on employment, church activities, membership, committees and councils.

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