

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Introduction:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the denomination's Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedure and Prevention of Disability Discrimination Policy

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and full participation for all of its ministers, students or ministry candidates. All people have the right of equal access to all the opportunities provided to ministers, students, licentiates, and to those candidating for ministry within the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

This policy outlines the denomination's commitment to equality among its ministers, students, licentiates and ministry candidates. It is our intention to work proactively within our church family to identify and to eliminate all forms of discrimination, wherever and whenever it occurs, and to celebrate God-given diversity within the human family.

The following paragraph was accepted by Synod June 2016 and replaces Item 3 of the original Equal Opportunities Policy which has been removed.

Resolution 2 Policies and Procedures

That Synod reaffirms the Policies and Procedures adopted in 2013 (subject to annual review). That Synod affirms and promotes ministry that is open to all (excluding genuine and determining occupational requirements) and hereby states that the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland welcomes applications for Christian ministry from all sections of the community; regardless of age, marital status, gender, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political opinion, of any individual applicant, or candidate. Passed by Synod June 2016.

2. Opposing Discrimination

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland opposes all forms discrimination in accordance with law, and it is their policy to comply with its duties under the antidiscrimination legislation save as where there is genuine and determining occupational requirement so as to comply with the doctrines of the NSPCI.

Review of the Policy:

This policy will be reviewed on an bi-annual basis by the General Purposes Committee on behalf of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland with relevant stakeholders to ensure compliance with best practice. The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland further welcomes submission from all stakeholders as to how this policy may be improved.

3. Non-compliance:

Where a minister, student, licentiates or ministry candidate, believes that they have been subject to discrimination then they should raise the matter with their Clerk of Presbytery, and the Clerk of General Synod of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. They may also consult the denomination's Grievance Policy, should that be appropriate.

Footnote taken from the coversheet when the Policies and procedures were in one document:

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland Policies & Procedures for Ministers within the NSPCI As adopted by the General Synod originally in 2013, amended in 2016 and reviewed, expanded, adopted by Pro Renata General Synod in January 2026.

Preface to supplementary policies and procedures for Ministers

The law of the church is the Code of Discipline of the General Synod.

It is intended that the Code of Discipline shall provide the principles and procedures which shall guide and govern the administration of the church and relations between ministers, people and the courts of the church.

Nevertheless, it is understood that for greater clarification and for further guidance in proceeding regard shall be had to the following policies and procedures, which are supplementary to the Code of Discipline, though not integral to it.

It should be noted that the ministry of this denomination is understood to be a vocation. That is, those entering into it should demonstrate a sense of calling; and all parties involved, whether ministers, congregations, or courts of the church, shall give full regard to the values of Christian Service, Christian Fellowship, and Christian Endeavour, as indicated in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

With regard to the profession of the Christian ministry, it is noted that while the nature of this work may not be physically demanding, it is however, highly demanding in intellectual and emotional terms. The hours can be lengthy and unpredictable. There are many challenges in supporting, comforting, and assisting a broad range of people; and the minister will carry the burdens of those people on his/her shoulders. While the ministry does bring deep spiritual satisfaction, it presents a challenge of life and work which is continuous.

Therefore, the minister must at all times seek the blessing and strength of the Holy Spirit, as should all who feel obliged to apply the following policies and procedures.