



URC Disciplinary Policy for Office Holders

Paper H2 General Assembly 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 Discipleship is about relationships. A disciple is simply a learner, someone who is learning to follow Jesus, growing in their relationship with him, with other people and

From time to time, disciples go astray and require discipline to remind them of the expected standards they have agreed to, to correct them and bring them into renewed commitment.

1.2 The Disciplinary Policy for Office Holders describes the process to be put into effect when office holders (not Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related

- 1.2 No matter what the structures in the local pastorate or synod may be, there may be times when the performance or conduct of an office holder falls below what is expected. The normal route for concerns about performance to the expected standard for a particular role would be a capability process except in the case of Gross Misconduct.
- 1.3 However, having a clear and established disciplinary process in place for unacceptable actions will prevent misunderstandings and seek to protect all. This should be shared with all office holders of the local pastorate during their induction.

2. The purpose of the policy

- 2.1 The United Reformed Church is committed to creating an environment where all office holders are able to perform to their best ability.
- 2.2 The United Reformed Church recognises that there will be occasions when disciplinary and / or performance problems arise. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that if such problems do arise, they are dealt with fairly and consistently across the denomination. This policy sets out the action that will be taken when problems occur.
- 2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, where an individual against whom an allegation of a disciplinary offence is made is a Minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Communi

support for the office holder. An informal meeting would not be recorded as disciplinary action and would be seen as a process of constructive dialogue.

7.2 If the problem cannot be resolved informally with your office holder, it might then be appropriate to invoke a disciplinary process upon guidance being sought from the synod moderator or their deputy.

8. Stage 1 formal verbal warning

8.1 A formal verbal warning may be given to the office holder if, despite informal discussions or training, the conduct or performance still does not meet acceptable standards. This should follow a further meeting delivered by the person within your church/pastorate / synod who is most relevant this may be the Minister, CRCW, Church Secretary or Line Manager.

8.2 The office holder will be told

- the reason for the warning
- what the office holder needs to do to improve the situation
- a time frame within which the conduct or performance needs to be improved
- any support or training the United Reformed Church might provide to support the volunteer
- that the verbal warning is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure.

8.3 A brief note of the warning should be kept but, subject to satisfactory conduct and / or performance, this would lapse after six months except in safeguarding related incidents where it will remain on file indefinitely.

9. Stage 2 written warning

9.1 If there is no improvement in standards within the prescribed time, or if a further offence occurs, the office holder should receive a letter from the Minister (or the Convener of the Elders Meeting) inviting them to attend a further disciplinary meeting.

9.2 The letter will contain:

- details of what the office holder has alleged to have done wrong
- the reason why the current behaviour or performance is unacceptable
- an invitation to attend a disciplinary meeting with the Minister (or the Convenor of the Elders Meeting) at which the problems can be discussed
- information about the right to be accompanied at the disciplinary meeting
- copies of any documents that will be referred to at the disciplinary meeting
- a copy of the disciplinary process
