



24 February 2016

Commission comment on teacher exception

This week the Assembly debated a proposal to repeal the clause in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998 which exempts the employment of teachers in a school from the provisions of the Order prohibiting religious discrimination. Though a majority voted in favour of removing the exemption, due to a petition of concern the amendment fell.

Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission Dr. Michael Wardlow points out that the Commission has, over many years, held the view that it is not acceptable to exclude the entire teaching workforce in Northern Ireland from Fair Employment laws which cover all other occupations in Northern Ireland. We have, for some years now, been urging that the exception of teachers from the Fair Employment legislation should be immediately narrowed so as to include only teachers in primary schools, and that early consideration be given to removing it entirely.

We have also urged that the requirement to monitor and review the community background of employees should apply to teachers as it does to all other employees.

- [Read more information about the Commission's views on this issue](#)