

# **DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

## **1. Background**

We welcome all who visit our church irrespective of their background. We acknowledge that each person comes from a different culture, nationality, faith, and background.

As a Christian church we are an inclusive community. Our diversity policy reflects this.

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities, fairness of treatment, dignity, work-life balance and the elimination of all forms of discrimination in the workplace for all employees and job applicants.

We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We have this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

Overall responsibility for this policy and equal opportunities training lies with [insert name and job title]

## **2. Policy**

2.1 Whoever we are, wherever we come from, whatever our age, our gender or any other difference that defines us, each of us has been made in the image of God and is unique. We seek to respect and value each person.

2.2 No person approaching the church for help or services will receive less favourable treatment on any grounds or be disadvantaged by any other conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable. As Christians our faith shape the way we do things.

2.3 For employees or prospective employee everyone will be given equal opportunity whatever his or her personal status subject to the statutory requirements relating to criminal record history and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

2.4 There are a number of employed roles where there is an occupation requirement for the individual to be a professing and practicing Christian under the Equality Act. In other roles where being a Christian is not requirement sympathy with the Christian faith will be sought.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and members of the congregation.

## **4. Principles**

4.1 In recognizing each person's uniqueness, we are committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment, volunteering, promotion, access to training and access to our services. Each person must be treated fairly irrespective of their sex, marital status, civil partnership status, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, culture, religion, age, or disability ('protected characteristics' as per the Equality Act 2010). This position is rooted in the principles we espouse about how God has made humanity - equal as recipients of His love and in need of rescue from the troubles we find ourselves in.

4.3 Our equality before the law of the land and before our loving God in no way assumes that we are all the same. He has made us all unique and our experiences of this imperfect world add to shaping the given different gifts, strengths, talents, abilities, personalities, aptitudes and preferences to express which we have been given. We have the potential and even obligation to explore them to the full. The appropriate choice between these differences is the basis for making selections.

4.4 Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional. It may also, in some cases, occur by association – i.e. where a person is put at a disadvantage due to a characteristic of another person.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same Protected Characteristic at a particular disadvantage.

4.5 Harassment related to any of the Protected Characteristics is also prohibited. Harassment is dealt with further in our Harassment Policy. Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

4.5 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which we treat all who come to, or who are members of the church. All employees and volunteers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass others regardless of their status.

## **5. Procedures**

5.1 Those responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees will be given information and, or, training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.

5.2 For employees, appropriate training will be given to help them perform their jobs effectively.

5.3 When employees are recruited no communication information will imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants against another unless there is an occupational requirement which will be clearly stated.

5.4 Applicants for roles will be given clear, accurate and sufficient information through advertisements, job descriptions and interviews.

5.5 Any complaints of discrimination and harassment by employees will be dealt through the grievance procedure.

5.6 We will review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives and as part of this process will monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of staff.

5.7 Employees are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting [Insert name and job title].