

# Disability Policy

VERSION: JULY 2020

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Diocese is committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to implement a policy that achieves equality of opportunity for all employees.
- 1.2 We undertake to develop a working environment and provide conditions of employment that, as far as practicable, will offer people with disabilities the opportunity to seek and maintain employment with us.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 'Disability discrimination' covers discrimination against people with disabilities who on account of injury, illness or inherited conditions may be disadvantaged in obtaining or keeping employment for which they are otherwise suitable.
- 2.2 'Disability' covers physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- 2.3 'Long-term' means that it must have lasted, or be expected to last, at least 12 months or for the rest of the person's life. Progressive conditions can also qualify where there are likely to be substantial future adverse effects. In the case of HIV, cancer and MS, these are classed as disabilities from the date of diagnosis.
- 2.4 'Disability' includes not only those disabilities that may immediately be apparent, but also conditions such as dyslexia, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, hearing or sight impairments and mental health difficulties. You are encouraged to seek advice, even if you do not meet the formal definition given in the legislation or the condition is not among those listed above. It is our intention to offer appropriate support based on individual needs.
- 2.5 In relation to disability, discrimination occurs if, for a reason that relates to a person's disability, a person is treated less favourably than others and this treatment cannot be justified.

## 3. AIMS

- 3.1 We value the contribution of all individuals irrespective of disability and believe that staff should be able to participate in the life and work of the Diocese. We are committed to ensuring that appropriate and reasonable support is offered to any staff with disabilities.
- 3.2 There is a positive duty on managers and supervisors to take into account the needs of employees with disabilities and to follow the advice laid out in this policy.

- 3.3 This includes establishing working conditions that encourage the full participation of individuals with disabilities and obtaining guidance in relation to reasonable and practicable adjustments to work or to the working environment to meet the needs of staff.
- 3.4 This policy outlines the support available to ensure that requirements are identified and suitable and appropriate provision is made.

#### **4. MONITORING**

- 4.1 In order to assist in the development and monitoring of appropriate policies and arrangements to support staff with disabilities, we will maintain records of employees that declare a disability and record data on applications for employment. This information will assist us in making informed developments and improvements in our policies and methods of working, taking into consideration the needs of all of our people.

#### **5. RECRUITMENT & SELECTION**

- 5.1 We welcome applications from people with disabilities and we have taken steps to raise awareness of disability within the Diocese. In particular awareness training has been targeted at employees involved in recruitment.
- 5.2 Applicants are encouraged to provide us with information on any practical requirements so that we can take them into account in our application and interview arrangements.
- 5.3 We will consider making supportive arrangements, appropriate to the requirements of an applicant, which may include:
- supplying job details in an alternative format;
  - ensuring ease of accessibility to the interview room and building;
  - provision of a signer, interpreter or assistant at interview;
  - provision of additional aids or equipment for use in assessment tests or the interview.
- 5.4 At interview, consideration of candidates and the decision on the appointment to the post in question will be based upon the suitability of the applicant's qualifications, experience and skills for the post.

#### **6. APPOINTMENT**

- 6.1 Any new staff who may require adaptations will be asked about their needs and whether there is anything that their new colleagues will need to be made aware of at the time of taking up employment. We will work with the individual to pre-empt their needs and where it is possible, reasonable adjustments and adaptations will be made.
- 6.2 Initial discussions should take place with Human Resources and the line manager who will liaise with the new employee. As necessary, expert advice may be sought to advise on adaptations.
- 6.3 As stated in our Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy, we are committed to the fair and equal treatment of all our employees, we will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, that disabled employees are not placed at any disadvantage, this includes terms and conditions of employment.

## **7. RETENTION**

- 7.1 We will seek to enable staff who become disabled, or where an existing disability progresses or worsens, to remain in their existing jobs with suitable adjustments, before considering other alternatives.
- 7.2 As appropriate, advice will be sought from Disability Employment Advisors or other organisations or agencies that can offer specialist advice on adaptations, equipment or training.
- 7.3 Equal consideration will be given to requests for reduced or part-time duties, whether on a temporary or permanent basis.
- 7.4 We will consult with any employee where appropriate to check the effects of their disability and job requirements.

## **8. ADJUSTMENTS**

- 8.1 A confidential meeting will be arranged to discuss appropriate adjustments to accommodate a disability. Specialist or expert advice may be sought to assist the process.
- 8.2 Many adjustments cost little or nothing to implement, other than the adoption of a positive approach to providing assistance to resolve problems faced by a colleague. In other cases the cost of a reasonable adjustment will need to be identified and considered as part of the assessment process.

Examples of the kind of adjustments that may be considered include:

- adjustments to premises;
- rearranging furniture to provide better access;
- re-organisation of duties;
- allowing someone to work more flexible hours;
- transfer to a different place of work;
- transfer to a different role;
- time off for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment;
- providing information in an accessible format such as large print, braille or on an audio tape so that they can do their job;
- providing a piece of specialist equipment, such as a text phone for a hearing impaired person or a screen reader for a visually impaired person;
- modifying instructions or reference manuals;
- modifying procedures for testing or assessment;
- enhanced supervision.

- 8.3 In the case of some disabilities, it may be possible to obtain, from external sources, funding to cover either in full or in part adaptations and the costs of providing a reader or interpreter to support the member of staff concerned.
- 8.4 We will consider any steps that might help to improve the position. While it may not be possible to do so in all circumstances, the intention is to provide appropriate assistance to staff and to take a positive attitude to making adjustments, which may include re-training.

## **9. ACCESS AND EXIT**

- 9.1 We aim to continually improve the appropriateness and accessibility of the workplace for employees and visitors with disabilities.
- 9.2 In addition to appropriate access, we give due consideration to the problems of exit from buildings faced by disabled staff given that during an emergency evacuation, lifts will not operate and there will be heavy usage of evacuation routes.
- 9.3 In order to cater for those with disabilities (such as sight, hearing or mobility impairment), line managers, in conjunction with the relevant Health & Safety coordinator, are responsible for ensuring that there are adequate arrangements for their safe evacuation.
- 9.4 Managers must take into account any temporary (e.g. a broken leg) or permanent disability when carrying out risk assessments so that the appropriate risk control measures can be put into place; for example, visual and other signals for those with impaired hearing who cannot hear alarms.

## **10. ADVICE TO STAFF**

- 10.1 Staff wishing on account of a disability to explore the possibility of obtaining adjustments or specialist equipment should discuss the matter with their line manager who may refer the matter where necessary to the Chief Operating Officer at Bishop's House, Hove. No action will take place without the express permission of the member of staff.

## **11. GRIEVANCES**

- 11.1 Any individual who considers that they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against on the grounds of their disability should raise the matter through the Grievance Policy.

## **12. FURTHER REFERENCES**

- 12.1 The following Diocese policies are also available for reference:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy
- Grievance Policy

## **Approval**

This policy was approved by the Diocesan Board of Trustees on:  
The next review is due by:

8 July 2020  
31 July 2022