

Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

VERSION: JULY 2020

1. THE POLICY

1.1 To confirm the Diocese's commitment to equal opportunity & diversity.

2. WHAT DOES THE DIOCESE MEAN BY 'EQUALITY'?

2.1 Equality: that all employees and job applicants can realise their full potential. All employees and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("Protected Characteristics").

3. WHAT DOES THE DIOCESE MEAN BY 'DIVERSITY'?

3.1 Diversity: this is the range of visible and non-visible differences such as, but not limited to, sex, age, background, race, disability, personality and work style, which when added together create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which the Diocese's goals and mission are met.

4. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

4.1 It is the policy of the Diocese to treat all employees and job applicants fairly and equally. We do not discriminate against Colleague based on Protected Characteristics whether they are a part-time worker, fixed term employee or are a member of a trade union.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 The Diocese is committed to being an equal opportunities organisation with respect for differences and diversity. The Diocese seeks to ensure no person is victimised or harassed or bullied or subjected to discrimination and that all employees feel secure and content and that the workplace is free from intimidation.

At the Diocese we:

- recognise that it is in the interests of our employees for diversity to be valued and equality embraced;
- value the diversity brought to our workforce by individuals, and believe that the Diocese will benefit from engaging employees from a variety of backgrounds;
- treat all employees and members with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation;

- seek a working environment based on positive relations between individuals;
- provide learning and on-going development for employees to support them in their work with members and in developing an inclusive organisation;
- consult with employees about their experience of our organisation and working environment and act where improvements are necessary;
- ensure any material that we produce for employees is appropriate to their needs and reflects the diversity of the community we serve;
- want employees to share the commitment and to ensure that policies and procedures are put into practice for the benefit of all;
- are committed to keeping our policies, procedures and practices under regular review in accordance with legislative developments.

5.2 The Diocese is an equal opportunities employer and does not permit unlawful discrimination of any kind, against any person, including:

- **direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be homosexual.
- **indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- **harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- **victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- **disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

6. RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION

- 6.1 Employees may request paid (holiday)/unpaid time off to observe a religious festival. Time off may be granted where appropriate departmental cover has been arranged. Employees may also request time off during the working day for prayers or to attend Mass (such as on Holy Days of Obligation).

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF EQUALITY POLICY

- 7.1 All Diocese policies are based on principles of equality of opportunity for all; including recruitment, training, development and promotion of employees.
- 7.2 All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat employees with dignity always, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. Any employee who is found to have discriminated against any other person on any grounds above will be subject to the disciplinary procedure up to and including dismissal.
- 7.3 Any person who believes that they are subject to unfair treatment on any of the grounds above may bring the complaint to the attention of their manager, or the HR Department at Bishop's House, Hove, using the Grievance Procedure.
- 7.4 The COO, alongside the Diocesan managers, is responsible for ensuring that the policy is communicated and implemented.

8. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

- 8.1 We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.
- 8.2 If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Harassment & Bullying Policy as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.
- 8.3 There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

9. CONTACTING THE HR DEPARTMENT

- 9.1 The Diocese works with an external HR adviser for support on employment issues. HR support is provided through the Chief Operating Officer via coo@abdiocese.org.uk.

Approval

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

8 July 2020
31 July 2022