

Equal Opportunities Policy

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) aims to be an equal opportunities employer and undertakes to apply objective criteria to assess merit. It aims to ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer, or other worker receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, sex, sexual orientation or perceived sexuality, marital status, disability, membership or non-membership of trade union, “spent convictions” of ex-offenders, class, age, politics, religion or belief.

The PCC recognises that some posts may nevertheless give rise to a genuine occupational requirement that the post-holder has a commitment to the Christian faith.

Selection criteria and procedures will ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

The PCC is committed to making this policy effective in order to minimise the possibility of discrimination, and finding means of combating it whenever it arises.

Responsibility

The PCC is responsible for establishing and reviewing this policy for the Parish as a whole. This policy applies to all employees, officeholders, members of diocesan bodies and volunteers who have personal responsibility for upholding the principles of equal opportunity. They are expected to comply with the provisions of the policy and help others to achieve its aims. Every member of the Parish is responsible for conducting themselves in a manner consistent with this Policy in all their church-related activities. All employees, officeholders, members of diocesan bodies and volunteers have personal responsibilities for upholding the principles of equal opportunity and helping others to achieve the aims of this Policy.

Types and Definitions of Discrimination

- **Direct Discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in similar circumstances on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, sex, sexual orientation or perceived sexuality, marital status, disability, membership or non-membership of trade union, “spent convictions” of ex-offenders, class, age, politics, religion or belief.
- **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which adversely affects one particular group considerably more than another and cannot be strictly justified in terms of requirements for performing the job.
- **Harassment** is defined as unwanted, unreciprocated and/or uninvited comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact that is found objectionable and offensive and that might threaten an employee’s job security, or create an intimidating working environment. Harassment is particularly liable to occur as part of sexual or racial discrimination (see separate Bullying and Harassment Policy).
- **Victimisation** is defined as singling out of an individual for harsh treatment, or unfair action/sanction.

Guidelines for Complaints relating to this Policy

Incidents of inappropriate behaviour that are not able to be resolved informally should be dealt with through existing grievance procedures. Any incident within a parish that does not involve a complaint against a member of the clergy should be handled within the parish, consulting Diocesan officers where appropriate.

Policy agreed and adopted by the PCC at a meeting on 7th July 2025