

Equal Opportunities in Employment policy

1.0 Policy Statement

St. John the Apostle and Evangelist Church (St. John's) wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality of opportunity in employment. UK laws impose many requirements upon employers and employees in respect of equality of opportunity. In addition to recognising the need to meet our legal requirements, we believe that by acting according to the principle of equality of opportunity we will benefit from a workforce drawn from a wide cross-section of the community. In this way we aim to recruit and retain the best staff. We believe that such a policy is also in the best interests of our employees.

St. John's supports the principle of equality of opportunity in employment and aims to ensure that:

- Recruitment, selection, training, consideration for promotion, and treatment at work for those who are employed in a paid or voluntary capacity within our organisation...
- Access to membership of committees and other groups ...

...are available without discrimination and that no-one is disadvantaged in any of these matters by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.

For a glossary of terms used in this policy, see **Appendix 1**.

2.0 Policy Principles

As employers we recognise a skilled and committed staff as one of the key factors in delivering the objectives of the Church. Our aim is therefore to encourage, support and develop the abilities of all our staff, to help them to contribute positively to delivering the objectives of St. John's, in the wider context of the mission of the Church of England, and to realise their potential. Reciprocally, employees and prospective employees will be expected to show that they are in sympathy with and committed to the aims of our Church. We also intend that all other aspects of our policies and practices will be consistent with the principle of equality of opportunity.

2.1 Recruitment, Selection, and Career Development

St. John's and our employees will not discriminate in recruitment, selection, and career development, directly or indirectly, between employees or between job applicants on the grounds of: age; disability; sex; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; sexual orientation; or religion and belief, except in the circumstances described in 2.2 below.

2.2 Religious Affiliation Criterion

Certain posts, whether paid or unpaid, will require that the post-holder supports the ethos and the values of the Christian faith, uphold the values of St. John's Church, and speak and act in line with Christian values in the course of their duties. These posts are recognised as having genuine occupational requirements. All information in relation to any of our posts, including advertising and role definitions / job descriptions will make the position of religious belief clear.

3.0 Responsibilities

The PCC commits to:

- Inform its employees of their responsibilities and opportunities under the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure that the Equal Opportunities policy is known to all staff and applicants.
- Take disciplinary action against those who are found to infringe on this policy.
- Eradicate discrimination by collaborating with all members and congregants on employment practices. No-one should harass, abuse, or intimidate others on any grounds.
- Cooperate with measures introduced to make sure there is equal opportunity in employment.

4.0 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed triennially, or sooner in response to new legislation, regional and / or national policy development, or specific demand and feedback, at the first PCC meeting after the APCM.

5.0 Relevant and Related Legislation, Policies, and Resources

- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulations 2019
- Complaints Policy 2024

6.0 Version Control

Version #	Author	Date	Summary of changes
01	PCC	November 2020	New policy
02	Meg Murphy	September 2024	Refresh, including: - updated terminology definitions - updated legislative titles - insertion of glossary of terms

Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Bias refers to the tendency, inclination, or opinion that is preconceived or unreasoned that hinders impartial judgement. Bias can be unconscious, conscious, or systematic.

Direct discrimination is when you treat someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic, whether the person possesses that protected characteristic or not. For example, not employing someone because they are a woman, or a particular race.

Diversity refers to characteristics of differences and similarities between people. Diversity includes factors that influence the identities and perspectives that people bring when interacting at work. Diversity can support the development of workplace environments and practices that foster learning from others to gain diverse perspectives on inclusiveness.

Duty to make reasonable adjustments is where a provision, criterion, or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to others who are not disabled. The church has a duty to take reasonable steps to avoid the disadvantage, including changes to physical features and providing information.

Equality refers to a state of being equal, especially in status, rights, opportunities, or outcomes.

Equity refers to the principle that policies, processes, and practices should be fairly applied, and individual needs recognised.

Indirect discrimination is when a policy, practice, or procedure that applies to everyone has an effect which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Occupational requirements apply in some work environments under specific exemptions (Equality Act 2010) to allow employers to require employees to have (or not have) certain protected characteristics. The burden is on the employer to show that there is a genuine occupational requirement attached to a particular job role. A typical example within the Church would be the post carries a genuine occupational requirement to be a practising Christian.

Positive action is proportionate steps taken to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise a disadvantage, to meet their needs, or to participate. For example, using the pronoun that someone has asked you to use.

Positive discrimination refers to making a decision in someone's favour because of their particular characteristic. Positive discrimination is usually unlawful, unless it falls within one of the very limited exceptions contained in the anti-discrimination legislation in relation to disability or as a genuine occupational requirement. A typical example within the Church would be the post carries a genuine occupational requirement to be a practising Christian.

Protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, disability, and pregnancy and maternity.