

Equal Opportunities Policy for Employees

The Church is committed to ensuring that no employee receives less favourable treatment due to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, unrelated criminal convictions, or membership or non-membership of a trade union. Positions in the church may carry an occupational requirement on the grounds of religion and belief under schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the employee must be able to demonstrate a Christian belief and value system in line with the Vineyard churches UK and Ireland statement of faith. Any such requirement will be made clear in the contract of employment.

All employees have a responsibility to co-operate with measures to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination; and to respect and act in accordance with the policy set out below. The Managers with ultimate responsibility for this policy are the Senior Pastors.

The Church will not condone any form of harassment or bullying, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with the Church.

You should be aware that whilst an employer can be held liable in law for acts of discrimination committed by employees, individual employees can also be held personally liable in law for acts of discrimination that they commit, authorise, contribute to or condone.

Every employee is responsible for ensuring the Church's Equal Opportunity Policy is applied to our dealings with our colleagues, clients and suppliers and should, in addition, be aware that it is unlawful to commit, authorise, contribute to or condone acts of discrimination in the provision of goods and services, on the grounds set out above.

You should therefore be aware that the following acts are unlawful and would constitute misconduct or gross misconduct liable to disciplinary action, which may include summary dismissal:

- Discriminating in the course of employment or prospective employment against fellow or future employees in job, transfer or promotion applications on the grounds established in this Equal Opportunities Policy
- Inducing or attempting to induce employees to practice unlawful discrimination
- Indulging in verbal or physical harassment of a nature that is known, or should be known, to be offensive to the victim
- Victimising individuals who have made or supported allegations or complaints/grievances of any discrimination or harassment or provided information about such discrimination or harassment, or are suspected of doing so

The following are the forms of discrimination that may give rise to a complaint and for which disciplinary action will be taken:

- **Direct Discrimination** – Treating a person less favourably than a person without that protected characteristic (such as age, race sex etc) would be treated. This also applies where the individual is thought to have that characteristic (*perceived discrimination*) or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (*associative discrimination*).
- **Indirect Discrimination** – where a practice or criterion applies to everyone but significantly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** – one person treating another person less favourably than they would treat other people because that person has made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Act, or because they are suspected of doing so.
- **Harassment** – for a reason relating to a person’s age, race, sex (including gender reassignment), disability, religion/belief or sexual orientation another person engages in unwanted conduct which may violate the person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, even if it is not directed at them.

If you perceive a problem on recruitment, selection, training, promotion or the application of terms and conditions of employment you should raise it in the first instance with your Manager, or another manager of appropriate seniority.

All cases of such behaviour will be investigated, and we will treat all complaints fairly, quickly and with confidentiality. Any grievance arising from the Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with using the existing Grievance Procedure.

Any employee, who has taken action in good faith over allegations of discrimination or harassment, will not be victimised by being treated any less favourably than any other employee as a consequence of taking such action.

This policy was reviewed by the Trustees on 15th January 2020