

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy for Lincolnshire Methodist District (The District)

INTRODUCTION

The District is fully committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, valuing and embracing diversity and ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach in all fields of its activity. The District adheres to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following specific protected characteristics: gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership and pregnancy & maternity.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the mission of the Methodist Church.

SCOPE

In accordance with the District's commitment to issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion all its lay employees and ministers, as well as volunteers, consultants, suppliers, contractors and agency workers, have a duty to act in accordance with this Policy, creating an environment free from discrimination.

AIM

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of equality, diversity and inclusion in the District's values:

- To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully reflected in its employment practices and procedures.
- To ensure that it is compliant with the statutory employment duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure employment policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed so that they do not operate against its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- To ensure it attracts and retains a diverse workforce through appropriate recruitment and selection methods except in a matter of:
 1. Occupational Requirement - in the light of the Methodist Church's Christian purpose and ethos it reserves the right to exercise legal exemptions under the Equality Act 2010 where it is declared that a Christian faith is integral to the work and requires membership of the Methodist Church or another recognised church;
 2. Offending background - in any case where the criminal record history relates to the requirements of the post.

DEFINITIONS

1. Discrimination:

- (a) **'Direct Discrimination'** is where a person is treated less favourably than another not on the merits of the case but on grounds of a protected characteristic.
- (b) **'Discrimination by association'** occurs where a person is directly discriminated against by association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- (c) **'Discrimination by perception'** is where a person is directly discriminated against based on a perception that the person has a particular protected characteristic even if the person does not actually possess that protected characteristic.
- (d) **'Indirect Discrimination'** occurs when a provision, practice or a criterion that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Although equally applicable to all possible applicants, this may nevertheless be discriminatory because:
 - (i) The number of persons of the same personal status who can comply with the requirement is considerably smaller than the number who cannot; and
 - (ii) The requirement cannot be shown to be justifiable.

2. **'Harassment'** is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity. There are three types:

- (a) Harassment related to a protected characteristic
- (b) Sexual harassment
- (c) Less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment

3. **'Victimisation'** occurs when an individual is treated badly or has suffered a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees are responsible for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and conducting themselves in accordance with this policy. Particular responsibility lies with the Line Manager and senior officers within the District.

The Chair of District and senior officers within the District will:

- Ensure that its commitment is communicated to all employees fairly and responsibly including potential employees, users of its services, and all those working for, or on behalf of, or providing a service to the District including consultants, volunteers, interns, agency workers and those on work experience placements.
- Lead by example, encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion internally and externally.

Line Managers will:

- Be responsible for creating a climate where the differences that individuals bring are valued.
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion in decision making processes.
- Foster good relations between all employees, service users/providers.
- Ensure that their direct reports attend equality, diversity and inclusion workshops periodically.
- Be responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees and be given information and / or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.

All employees will:

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is taken into account in undertaking their work to serve the District.
- Be aware of their responsibilities and report inappropriate behaviour/s and raise any incident/s that breach this policy and procedure with their line manager.
- Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedure, ensuring that their practices are consistent with its contents.
- Undertake equality, diversity & inclusion training as required

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within the District's recruitment and selection procedures.

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

If any employee believes that he/she has been subject to discrimination under this Policy, then he/she is encouraged to raise the matter with his/her line manager or the Chair of the District.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this Policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated in accordance with the Grievance procedure. Employees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the Disciplinary procedure.

Any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The District takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

For ministers serving within the District

The Complaints and Discipline process as set out in Part 11 of Standing Orders applies to all ministers.