



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

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1. Introduction

The Yorkshire North & East 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.

2. 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.

3. Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of equality, diversity, and inclusion in district values:

- Ensuring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are reflected in employment practices and processes.
- To ensure compliance with statutory employment duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure employment policies, processes and procedures are monitored and reviewed so to continue the promotion of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in all that we do and to maintain relevance under the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure it attracts and retains a diverse workforce through appropriate recruitment and selection methods except in a matter of:

- a) Occupational Requirement - in the light of the Methodist Church's Christian purpose 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.
- b) Offending background - in any case where the criminal record history relates to the requirements of the post.

4. Definitions

4a. Discrimination:

- '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.
- 'Discrimination by association' occurs where a person is directly discriminated against by association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- '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.
- '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:
 - a) The number of persons of the same personal status who can comply with the requirement is considerably smaller than the number who cannot; and
 - b) The requirement cannot be shown to be justifiable.

4b. 'Harassment'

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

- Harassment related to a protected characteristic.
- Sexual harassment, and,
- Less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

4c. 'Victimisation'

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.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All Lay Employees and Ministers are responsible for promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and conducting themselves in accordance with this policy. Responsibility lies with the Line Manager and senior officers within the employing body.

The Chair of District will:

- Ensure the district's commitment is communicated to all Lay Employees and Ministers fairly and responsibly including potential Lay Employees and Ministers, service users, 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.
- Be responsible for creating a climate and workplace culture where the differences that individuals bring are embraced and valued, and,
- Embed Equality, Diversity and inclusion in decision making processes.

Line Managers will:

- Foster good relations between all Lay Employees and Ministers, service users and providers.
- Ensure those they manage attend Equality, Diversity & Inclusion workshops periodically, and,

- Be responsible for the selection, management and promotion of Lay Employees and be given information and training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.

All Lay Employees and Ministers will:

- Ensure that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is considered in undertaking their work to serve the district, circuit, church, or venue that falls under the district umbrella.
- Be aware of their responsibilities and report inappropriate behaviour and raise any incident that breaches this policy and procedure with their Line Manager.
- Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedure, ensuring that their practices are consistent with its contents, and,
- Undertake Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training.

6. Recruitment and Selection

The principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are embedded within the district's recruitment and selection procedures.

7. Breaches of this Policy

If any Lay Employee or Minister believes that they have been subject to discrimination under this Policy, then they are encouraged to raise the matter with their Line Manager, supervisor, or Chair.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated in accordance with the Grievance Procedure. Employees or Ministers 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 Lay Employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal. The district takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

8. Ministers serving within the District

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