

Christian Science Society, Oxted (“the Church”)

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

INTRODUCTION

Equality, diversity and inclusion are important to the Church and it is fully committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, valuing and embracing diversity and ensuring an inclusive approach in its activities. The Church complies with 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.

SCOPE

Reflecting the Church’s commitment to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion, all its members, employees, 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 Policy of this Church is intended:

- To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully reflected in all its activities.
- To ensure that it is compliant with the statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure employment (if any) and appointment policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed so that they do not operate against its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- To ensure it can attract and retain a diverse membership (and volunteer or employed workforce as appropriate) through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures.

In light of the Church’s Christian Science purpose and ethos, and its obedience to the Manual of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, by Mary Baker Eddy, the Church reserves the right to exercise legal exemptions under the Equality Act 2010 wherever a Christian faith is integral to selection and where adherence to the teachings and Tenets of Christian Science and/or membership of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts is considered necessary.

DEFINITIONS: This Policy covers discrimination, harassment, and victimisation as follows:

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 an individual 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 members and trustees are responsible for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and conducting themselves in accordance with this Policy. Particular responsibility lies with the Board.

The Board will:

- ensure that the effect of this Policy is communicated to all members, volunteers and employees and contractors appropriately, fairly and responsibly including to potential employees and members, users of its services, and all those working for, or on behalf of, or providing a service to the Church;
- encourage equality, diversity and inclusion internally and externally by example;
- embed equality, diversity and inclusion in decision making processes;
- be responsible for creating a climate where individuals' differences are valued;
- be responsible for the selection and management of members, volunteers and contractors, taking appropriate steps to minimise the risk of discrimination.

Church officers will:

- foster good relations between all officers, members, and service users/providers;
- ensure that everyone in our Church community is aware of this Policy's meaning.

Church members and volunteers will:

- ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is taken into account as they serve the Church;
- be aware of their responsibilities, report inappropriate behavior, and raise any incident that breaches this Policy with an appropriate Church officer;
- familiarise themselves with this Policy, ensuring that their practices are consistent with it.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion will be followed in recruitment and selection of members, volunteers, employees (if any) and contractors.

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

If anyone believes that he/she has been subject to discrimination, then he/she should raise the matter with the Board chair or any other member of the Board.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this Policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated in accordance with the Church's disciplinary procedure. Anyone who makes such an allegation in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Any member, employee, contractor or volunteer who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by the Board not less than every (5) years.