



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy of the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire Methodist District

INTRODUCTION

The Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District of the Methodist Church is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, valuing and embracing diversity and ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach in all areas of its work. The District adheres to the Equality Act 2010, which recognises the following protected characteristics: gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership and pregnancy & maternity. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) 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 employees and District officers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, thereby 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 ways of working in order to ensure:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion concerns are reflected in its work practices and procedures;
- Compliance with the statutory employment duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- Employment policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed in accordance with current Equality, Diversity and Inclusion practices.
- Recruitment of a diverse workforce of employees and District officers through appropriate recruitment and selection methods, except in cases of:
 1. Occupational Requirement – the Methodist Church reserves the right to exercise legal exemptions under the Equality Act 2010 where it is declared that Christian faith is integral to the work and requires membership of the Methodist Church or another recognised church;
 2. Offending background – where the criminal record history is relevant to the requirements of the post.

DEFINITIONS

1. 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:

- (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

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

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 and District officers are responsible for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and conducting themselves in accordance with this policy. Particular responsibility lies with line managers and senior District officers.

The District Chair will:

- Ensure that the District's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is communicated to employees and District officers;
- Lead by example, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the District;
- Promote a climate where the differences that individuals bring are valued;
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion in decision-making processes.

Line Managers will:

- Foster good relations among employees and District officers.
- Provide opportunities for employees to receive equality, diversity and inclusion training.
- Be responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees in such a way as to minimise the risk of discrimination.

All employees and District officers will:

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

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

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

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

If an employee or District officer believes that he/she has been subject to discrimination under this policy, then he/she is encouraged to raise the matter with the District Chair or Synod Secretary, as appropriate.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the grievance procedure. Employees or officers 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 appropriate disciplinary procedure.

An employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action under the District's disciplinary procedures. A District officer who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action under the complaints and discipline process as set out in Part 11 of Standing Orders, which applies to all ministers and lay members of the Methodist. In the case of an employee, 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.

District replaced by Circuit

Adopted by North Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit

Signed

Dated

9/9/2024

Adopted for 2 years

North Bedfordshire Circuit Meeting September 2024
Issues requiring circuit action

1. Adoption of the Connexional and District policies as listed below for 2 years unless they need updating before.

Issue

To approve the Connexional and District policies as follows:

- Connexional Safer Recruitment
- District Equality Diversity and Inclusion
- Connexional Anti Bullying Policy
- Connexional Working with Victims and Survivors
- District Lone Worker Policy
- District Whistle Blowing Policy

Timing

Immediate

Recommendation

All of the above policies are approved for 2 years, unless revision is needed before.

Background and argument

All policies to be agreed where no changes are needed at the September North Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit Meeting every two years.

Next Steps

Proposed by

Stephen Gill

Seconded by

Phil Furness

Abstained.....

Agreed by the Meeting

Signed Rev Michael Giles

[Signature]

Superintendent Minister

9th September 2024