

# **BEULAH BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

Adopted 2014

Reviewed September 2024

Next review date November 2027

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**Equality and Diversity Policy**

**1. Principles**

1.1 Beulah Baptist Church is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all fields of its activity in accordance with this Policy Statement.

We support the principle of equality and diversity in employment and service delivery. The Church

recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination.

1.2 All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

1.3 Definitions:

**Discrimination** = any unlawful discrimination

Although there may be circumstances justifying different treatment, which are not unlawful (for example to comply with a genuine occupational requirement for a position), Beulah Baptist Church will not tolerate unlawful discrimination and/or harassment on the grounds of an individual's sex, race, marital status, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, religious belief, union membership or employment status. Any reference to discrimination in this policy includes all such possible grounds.

**'Protected Characteristic'** refers to sex, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, age, gender reassignment or religion or belief.

Discrimination can take two forms,

**'Direct Discrimination'** is where a person is treated less favourably than others are, or would be, for a reason related to one or more of the 'Protected Characteristics'.

**'Indirect Discrimination'** occurs where an individual is subject to a provision, criterion or practice which one protected group finds more difficult to comply with than another (even though on the face of it the provision is neutral

1.4 Trustees, Leaders, and Church Workers including Volunteers and Employees have a duty to co-operate with the Church to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Employees and Volunteers should draw the attention of the leadership (the Senior pastor or the church secretary) to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying behaviour or harassment.

**2. Statement of Intent**

2.1 In accordance with the Ethos and Vision Statement, the Church welcomes everyone, asking that all respect and work within the context of our Christian beliefs.

2.2 Because of the nature and responsibilities of many jobs at the Church there may be a genuine requirement for the job-holder to be a practising Christian for the church to preserve its

distinctiveness in accordance with the Employment Equality Regulations 2003. Such job requirements are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain valid and objectively justifiable.

The Trustees and Church Leaders are required to be Christians.

2.3 The Church aims to create a culture where Jesus Christ is honoured, and his love and mercy are evident in all our actions and relationships.

### **3. Implementation**

3.1 It is the responsibility of the Trustees, working with the Leadership Team to monitor effectiveness, and to review and develop the policy in the context of our Christian beliefs and witness. The Senior Church Minister and church officers are responsible for the policy's day-to-day implementation.

3.2 Each employee is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action. Appropriate training and guidance will be provided to support compliance with the policy.

### **4. Working in the Community**

In working within the community and in offering services, activities and facilities to the community the Church will:

- Ensure that they are accessible and provided fairly to people who seek our help
- Ensure that all service users are treated with dignity and respect, and that we recognise and value people's differences
- Ensure that complaints procedures are easy to use, and that we respond to complaints efficiently and promptly

### **5. Recruitment**

5.1 All job vacancies will be advertised internally in the first instance and/or within the wider Christian community.

5.2 The Church will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect the requirements for the job and make clear if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the person to be a Christian.

5.3 All advertisements will state that the Church is seeking to be an effective equal opportunities employer. A copy of the Church's Equality and Diversity Policy will form part of all application packs.

5.4 Application packs and information will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience is valid.

5.5 The Church will monitor diversity information about job applicants. This information will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of staff.

## **6 Training Opportunities**

6.1 Subject to the requirements of doing their job, employees will be encouraged to go on courses relevant to their present job or personal development. Training courses will normally be non- residential (where practicable) and in working hours whenever possible.

6.2 It is the responsibility of every individual member of staff to participate in any equality and diversity training that is provided.

## **7 Working conditions**

### **7.1 Flexible Hours and Job Sharing**

Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees with no qualifying length of service, to facilitate the caring for children and other dependents. All formal requests for job sharing or part-time working to meet employees' needs for shorter working hours will be sympathetically considered, subject to operational requirements. This applies to both men and women.

### **7.2 Disabled Provision**

The Church has disabled access to all meetings and will, wherever possible/practical respond positively to requests made by employees for specific aids and adaptations that are needed to enable them to do their job.

A hearing loop is available, and the words of songs used during main services are available in large print.

Twice a month an ACCESS group meets during morning services to make the Christian message more accessible for adults with learning disabilities

## **8 Use of Language**

Staff will avoid and challenge the use of language which belittles or demeans others. Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken.

## **9 Bullying and Harassment**

9.1 No one should be the subject of bullying or other forms of harassment. Harassment is unwanted/inappropriate behaviour including verbal abuse, including belittling or 'putting people down' in front of others; unwanted and unwarranted physical contact; repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive; 'stalking' behaviours, e.g. unwanted telephone calls, uninvited calls to someone's home/work place etc, sexual/racial or disability innuendo or other forms of inappropriate physical contact including sexual abuse.

9.2 If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome, and they persist with it, then the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.