

Equality and Diversity Policy

1 Principles

- 1.1 St Peter's Baptist Church supports 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. 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 should draw the attention of their line manager 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, St Peter's Baptist Church welcomes everyone, asking that all respect and works within the context of our Christian beliefs. The Ministerial Team, all Church Leaders and Church Members are required to be Christians.
- 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. Such job requirements are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain valid and objectively justifiable.
- 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 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 is 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

4.1 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.
- Make sure that all service users are treated with dignity and respect, and that we recognise and value people's differences.
- Make sure 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 or male/female.

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 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 Pregnancy

The Church recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions and will consider sympathetically any requests for such changes subject to operational requirements.

7.2 Antenatal Care

Time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant employees to attend antenatal classes, including medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary.

7.3 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 dependants. 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.

7.4 Disabled Access

The Church has disabled access to its premises and will respond positively to requests made by employees for specific aids and adaptations that are needed to enable them to do their job.

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.

10 Dealing with Complaints

10.1 If anyone feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against they are entitled to pursue the matter with either:

- their line manager in the case of staff or
- for members of the public and/or where the complaint relates to the Church Centre Manager/Coffee Shop Manager the Senior Minister or the designated Church Leader.

10.2 All complaints of discriminatory behaviour, including bullying or harassment will be treated seriously. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious and may involve using the disciplinary procedure.

January 2012