**Equality & Diversity Policy of**

**King’s Church Beverley**

**Date of adoption 27th September 2024**

**Introduction**

This Church believes that all people are created in God’s image and are loved by God, but all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We recognise that Christ’s atoning sacrifice was made for us all, and Christians are instructed not to show favouritism just as God does not show favouritism (Romans 2:11). In his ministry, Jesus showed God’s love through his openness to everyone, including those who were marginalised.

**Statement of Intent**

This Church commits to show the same openness to all people in today’s world. As an organisation, we are committed to principles of equal opportunity. We intend in spirit and in deed to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all our activities and we are committed to behave as an equal opportunity organisation within the bounds of relevant applicable church ‘rules’.

* We will nurture inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
* We will value the distinctive contribution of diverse cultures in our society generally, and in our worshipping community in particular.
* We are committed to social justice and will resolutely oppose discrimination within our church and in wider society.
* We are committed to providing a work environment free from harassment.

We recognise that, as well as our biblical principles of faith and conduct, we have legal obligations. We therefore require all workers to respect and act in accordance with this Policy, recognising that it cannot be applied directly to volunteers, contractors or third parties. If any related issues become apparent in relation to these individuals, the matter will be raised with them and action taken if appropriate.

**Scope**

This policy covers all aspects of employment and provision of services including, but not restricted to:

* Employment pay and conditions;
* Training and Continuous Professional Development;
* Recruitment and Selection processes (including promotions);
* Grievance and Disciplinary matters;
* Ending an employment contract;
* How we treat our suppliers;
* How we treat those who use our services.

**Definitions**

Any reference to ‘discrimination’ or similar in this policy means unlawful discrimination relating to a protected characteristic (see below).

We recognise that discrimination can be:

Direct Discrimination:

Where you are treated less favourably than another person, because of a protected characteristic. However, direct discrimination may be objectively justified when it relates to age.

Indirect Discrimination:

Indirect discrimination basically occurs when a requirement or condition is applied generally, but which has a detrimental impact upon a group that share a protected characteristic. There is no discrimination if the requirement can be objectively justified.

Perceptive Discrimination:

Where discrimination occurs against someone because the discriminator thinks the person is of a particular racial group or sexual orientation, etc., even if they are not.

Associative Discrimination:

This type of discrimination can occur against someone because they have an association with someone who is of a particular sexual orientation or racial group etc.

Disability-Related Discrimination:

The Equality Act 2010 also prohibits disability-related discrimination, that is treating someone less favourably because of something relating to a disability. There is no discrimination if the requirement can be objectively justified.

Disability – Reasonable Adjustments:

The Equality Act 2010 sets out an additional obligation upon employers to make “reasonable adjustments” so that a disabled employee (or job applicant) is not substantially disadvantaged. We will accordingly make reasonable adjustments to ensure career opportunities are available to all people with disabilities.

Harassment

Harassment is, in general terms, unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another. Harassment may be unlawful, particularly where the harassment occurs because of a protected characteristic.

**Discrimination**

We recognise that discrimination occurs when someone directly or indirectly treats a person or a group of people less favourably.

We also recognise that it may be unlawful when it relates to a ‘protected characteristic’ i.e. age, sex, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, skin colour, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, child or domestic care arrangements, pregnancy and maternity arrangements, marital or civil partnership status.

We recognise that promoting equality of opportunity is not simply a matter of treating everyone the same. In some cases more favourable treatment for an under-represented group might be necessary in order to redress an inequality of opportunity.

**Christian Ethos**

As a Christian organisation, the nature and context of some of the positions and roles in our Church may mean that personal characteristics, such as religious beliefs, will lawfully and properly inform decisions. This does not detract from the principle that we are an Equal Opportunity employer and we recognise the benefit of employing a diverse workforce.

All applicants who can fulfil the role and meet any occupational requirement are welcome to apply and will be assessed against the job or role description and any person specification.

For the avoidance of doubt, discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or absence of religious belief will not be tolerated. However we will only allow people to take roles or contribute to the public ministry of the church if they share our core values as expressed in our doctrinal statement and moral policy.

**Equal Opportunities in Church Life**

* We will promote respect for other people and we will treat everyone fairly.
* We will encourage the use of inclusive language and images in our conversations, worship, literature and publicity.
* We will challenge any discriminatory attitudes and actions of members of our congregation and take steps to bring them to an end.
* We will seek to address the inequalities of opportunity faced by people in under-represented groups where possible. We will identify and remove barriers to participation in all aspects of church life, including employment (both paid and voluntary roles), training, promotion, leadership and representation on teams and committees.
* We will challenge all forms of harassment, bullying or victimisation within the church and take steps to bring it to an end. We consider harassment to be words or actions which are unwelcome, unwanted and offensive to the person receiving them and which create an atmosphere of intimidation, hostility or humiliation for that person. Such behaviour can include embarrassing or offensive jokes, unwelcome physical contact or sexual advances, the expression of racist or homophobic views, lewd comments etc.
* We will ensure that this policy is known by the congregation and that our staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities for implementing this policy. To this end, we will offer education and training in the principles and practice of this equalities policy from time to time.

**Equal Opportunities in Provision of Services**

In this context, 'services' does not refer simply to acts of worship, but to the whole range of services a typical church might offer, including: children's activities; toddler groups; cafes, lunch clubs, or coffee mornings; other events; etc.

We are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, skin colour, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, child or domestic care arrangements, pregnancy and maternity arrangements, marital or civil partnership status. No person requiring services from this Church will be treated less favourably than any other person.

We will take reasonable steps to alter or remove features of our premises if they make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for people with a disability to make use of the facilities that the Church provides.

**Equal Opportunities for Paid Staff and Volunteers**

We advertise vacancies avoiding wording that could discourage groups of people from applying, or stereotype in any way.

We select all candidates for an interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to our values and purposes.

We actively seek to recruit, promote and train workers based on the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all. We welcome applications from a wide range of candidates.

We make decisions based on merit using non-discriminatory and, where practicable, objective criteria.

We will not ask anyone wanting to work for us about their health or whether they have a disability, before a job offer is made, except in very limited situations (for example it may be justifiable to ask whether the applicant needs any disability-related measures put in place for the interview, or to check that they are capable of carrying out a key part of the job. It may be appropriate for some job offers to be dependent upon a medical examination.)

We will treat matters raised sensitively and, where possible, in confidence including complying with requests for anonymity.

As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, some posts can only be filled by Christians. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a 'protected characteristic' (or 'genuine occupational requirement') for the post-holders to be Christians. Relevant responsibilities include but are not limited to senior leadership or management of a Christian organisation; teaching or promoting the Christian faith; evangelism; leading or participating in worship, prayer or bible-study. All staff in these posts (paid or unpaid) will be required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith and assent to our core values as expressed in the doctrinal statement and the moral policy.

**Equal opportunities in assessing information about criminal records**

We use the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' and workers ongoing suitability for positions of trust. This Church will comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We will not discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

Where a Disclosure is part of a recruitment process, we will encourage all interviewees to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process, and under separate, confidential cover to the recruiter within the organisation so that it will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.

For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position. We recognise that some external agencies have proof of disclosure requirements that we will abide by (e.g. AoG Minister of Religion accreditation)

We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and risk assess the relevance of circumstances or offences.

**Your Responsibilities**

Everyone has an essential role in the delivery of this policy, with their own duties, roles and responsibilities. If you do not meet those roles, duties or responsibilities, you may be personally sued for discrimination and held liable.

Line Managers have a particular responsibility to ensure that everyone is respected and that workplace decisions are made for right and justifiable reasons.

 We expect everyone to:

* co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity;
* report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
* not induce or attempt to induce others to practise discrimination;
* not treat anyone less favourably as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination (“victimisation”);
* not subject others to harassment.

If you are concerned about any breaches of this Policy, you should raise your concerns with your Line Manager. Alternatively, formal complaints can be made under the Grievance Procedure.

**Monitoring of Equal Opportunities within the church**

The Leadership Team and Church Council will monitor the implementation of this policy. It will be displayed on the church website, together with a notice advising people of the contact names and addresses of the people to whom they should make any complaints - or to whom they should give compliments.

This policy is reviewed and updated every 3 years by the Church Council.