

CALDERDALE METHODIST CIRCUIT MEETING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
DEFINITIONS	3
SCOPE.....	4
AIM	4
OUR COMMITMENTS TO YOU	5
OUR COMMITMENTS AS A SERVICE PROVIDER	6
OUR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENTS.....	6
Age	6
Disability.....	6
Gender.....	7
Marriage and civil partnership	7
Pregnancy and maternity	7
Race.....	7
Religion or belief	7
Sexual orientation	8
Part time and fixed term work	8
Equal pay	8
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010	8
Direct Discrimination.....	8
Indirect discrimination	8
Associative discrimination	9
Discrimination by perception.....	9
Discrimination arising from disability	9
Failing to make reasonable adjustments	9
Harassment.....	9

Sexual Harassment.....	9
Victimisation.....	10
Bullying.....	10
WHAT WE EXPECT FROM OUR PEOPLE	10
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	12
TRAINING	12
BREACHES OF THIS POLICY	13

INTRODUCTION

Within the Methodist Church we believe that everyone should be enabled to flourish, to become the people whom God created them to be.

The Calderdale Methodist Circuit Meeting ('the Circuit') are committed to supporting our inclusive culture. Further details can be found in the Methodist Church's strategy for [Justice, Dignity and Solidarity](#).

This means we aim:

- to celebrate the rich diversity of people within the Methodist Church;
- to eradicate all discrimination, to treat all people justly and with dignity across the breadth of the Methodist Church;
- for a profound change in the culture, practices and attitudes of the Methodist Church so that all people are able to be full participants in the Church's life.

We are an equal opportunities employer and we value the uniqueness of all our people and the differences they bring to the table. The overarching purpose of this policy is to support the Circuit in its commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity and the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We value and embrace diversity and our intention is to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach in all fields of the Circuit's activity, which we believe creates a happier, more productive working environment for all.

The Circuit adheres to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises specific protected characteristics and this policy aims to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

We do not discriminate because of any factors irrelevant to the requirements of a job role and will reinforce our culture which values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency on an ongoing basis. Our policy also seeks to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

All our people, whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Circuit as we seek to develop the skills and abilities of our people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with Circuit Officers and Line Managers, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of everyone to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality and equity throughout the Circuit.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination, you should refer to our Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy and you may raise the matter via our Grievance Procedure.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

DEFINITIONS

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity and equity are at the heart of this policy, defined as follows:

- 'Equality' means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination;
- 'Inclusion' means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution;

- 'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce;
- 'Equity' means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

We will actively support equality, inclusion, diversity and equity and ensure that our employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone working in the Circuit to reach their potential.

SCOPE

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. In accordance with this commitment, this policy covers anyone working for us. This includes the Circuit's employees and officers, as well as volunteers, secondees, consultants, suppliers, contractors, casual workers, agency workers, interns and apprentices, whether permanent or temporary, who all have a duty to comply with this policy in order to promote and maintain an environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. This policy applies to all processes relating to employment and training, including recruitment, selection, deployment, career development and promotion. These areas are monitored to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

The policy also applies to any dealings with service users, customers and clients, including local church / District representatives or officials.

This policy accompanies our Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy.

AIM

The purpose of this policy is:

- to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully reflected in the employment practices and procedures of the Circuit;
- to ensure that the Circuit is compliant with the statutory employment duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance;
- to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment;
- to ensure employment policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed so that they do not contradict this policy;
- to ensure the Circuit attracts and retains a diverse workforce through appropriate recruitment and selection methods.

Please note that in cases where an Occupational Requirement is identified in relation to a specific role at the time of recruitment, under the Equality Act 2010 an employing body may be entitled to target candidates with specific protected characteristics.

In order to be able to defend a potential discrimination claim, an employing body must however be able to demonstrate that the requirement is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. For example, in the light of the Methodist Church's purpose and ethos, the Circuit may have the right to exercise legal exemption for specific roles where it is considered that the Christian faith is integral to the core requirements of a particular role.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO YOU

The Circuit is committed to:

- creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our people are recognised and valued;
- recognising that everyone is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, trust and respect to all. No form of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation will be tolerated;
- providing training, development and progression opportunities to all employees;
- understanding that equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace is good management practice, makes sound business sense and this culture supports wellbeing, enabling our people to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong;
- reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and inclusion for all;
- taking steps to ensure equity amongst our workforce such as ensuring that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse range of potential candidates and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in our Circuit, taking positive action to recruit disabled people and ensuring there are no unlawful barriers to accessing our employment opportunities, training, progression opportunities, benefits and facilities;
- diversity in our workforce will be regularly monitored to ensure equal opportunities throughout the Circuit. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary obstacles and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups;
- monitoring and reviewing this policy annually.

OUR COMMITMENTS AS A SERVICE PROVIDER

The Circuit is committed to:

- providing services to which all clients (including local church / circuit representatives or officials), are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation;
- making sure our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our clients;
- taking steps to ensure equity amongst our clients such as removing any unlawful obstacles to accessing our services or facilities. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups;
- fully supporting this policy by Circuit officers;
- monitoring and reviewing this policy annually;
- having clear procedures that enable our clients, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

OUR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENTS

Age

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;
- ensure that people are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities; and
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

Disability

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure people with a disability have access to our services and employment opportunities. If we feel that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will discuss this with the individual accordingly and try to find an alternative solution where possible;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disability; and
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems, braille facilities, alternative formatting and sign language interpretation;
- encourage you to tell us about your condition, if you are disabled or become disabled, so that we can support you as appropriate and provide any reasonable adjustments;
- keep the physical features of our premises under review to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

Gender

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about gender, gender identity and gender reassignment;
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone;
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same; and
- provide support to prevent discrimination relating to gender reassignment status against transgender people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

We will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity regardless of marriage or civil partnership status;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our people; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged as a result of their marriage or civil partnership status.

Pregnancy and maternity

We will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity during pregnancy or maternity leave;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about pregnancy or maternity; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged during pregnancy or maternity leave and that we take account of the needs of our employees during pregnancy or maternity leave.

Race

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents; and
- actively promote race equality and inclusion in the Circuit;
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone;
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Religion or belief

We will:

- ensure that people's religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and

- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

Sexual orientation

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of everyone, including the LGBTQIA+ communities;
- promote positive images of the LGBTQIA+ communities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the LGBTQIA+ communities;
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone; and
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Part time and fixed term work

Part time and fixed term employees should be treated the same as comparable full time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

Equal pay

We will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional, is not always obvious and may be subtle and unconscious. This stems from a person's general assumptions about the abilities, interests and characteristics of a particular group that influences how they treat those people (known as "unconscious bias"). Such assumptions or prejudices may cause them to apply requirements or conditions that put those in particular groups at a disadvantage.

The following descriptions clarify the different types of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010:

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that characteristic (for example, choosing not to recruit someone because they are disabled and you think they "wouldn't fit in" to the team).
- **Indirect discrimination:** Where a policy, procedure or way of working that applies to everyone puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared with people who do not have that characteristic, unless there is a good reason to justify it. An example is introducing a requirement for all staff to finish work at 6pm. It is arguable that female employees, who statistically bear the larger

share of childcare responsibilities could be at a disadvantage if the new working hours prevent them from collecting their children from school or nursery.

- **Associative discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example, because their partner is transgender.
- **Discrimination by perception:** Treating someone less favourably because you perceive them to have a protected characteristic even if they do not, for example, choosing not to promote someone because you mistakenly perceive them to be gay.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with that person's disability and where such treatment is not justified. Examples include:
 - dismissing or failing to pay a bonus to someone because of their disability-related absence; or
 - disciplining someone for losing their temper where such loss of temper was out of character and was due to severe pain caused by them having cancer.
- **Failing to make reasonable adjustments:** Employing bodies are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or the employing body's premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Failing to comply with this duty is unlawful. Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:
 - allocating some of the disabled person's duties to a colleague;
 - changing their working hours or place of work;
 - adjusting procedures for assessing job candidates; and
 - modifying disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 that has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Alternatively, the conduct may amount to harassment if it is reasonably considered by the target of the conduct to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- **Sexual Harassment** is:
 - conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and

- less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

You should refer to our Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy for further information on our procedure for reporting harassment.

- **Victimisation** occurs when an individual has suffered a detriment because they have done one of the "protected acts" set out below, or it is believed that they have or may have done one of these acts.

The protected acts, which must not be done in bad faith, are:

- bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010;
 - giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Act;
 - doing any other thing for the purposes of, or in connection with, the Act; or
 - making allegations that another person has contravened the Act.
- **Bullying:** There is no legal definition of bullying. However, we regard it as conduct which is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient.
 - Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be carried out by email, phone calls, online (cyber-bullying) or on social media. Bullying may occur in the workplace or outside work.
 - If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it will also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful (see 'Harassment' above).

You should refer to our Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy for further information on our procedure for reporting bullying.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM OUR PEOPLE

We expect you, and every one of our people, to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting and applying equality, diversity and inclusion and conducting themselves in accordance with this policy.

Our culture is made in the day-to-day working interactions between us so creating the right environment is a responsibility that we all share.

Cultivating this culture does not happen by accident but requires ongoing commitment and nurturing. The reality is that we live in a world where areas of difference (whether gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or others) often translate to biases, challenges and barriers that may not be faced by others.

We expect you to treat your colleagues and third parties (including local church / circuit representatives or officials, customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff, consultants and members of the community) fairly and with dignity, trust and respect. Sometimes, this may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute.

By embedding such values and constructively challenging inappropriate comments or ways of working, you can help us achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.

Any dealings that you have with colleagues or third parties must be free from any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.

Particular responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion lies with Line Managers and Circuit Officers. All our people should understand that they, as well as the Circuit, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against colleagues and third parties.

The Superintendent Minister and Circuit Officers will:

- ensure that the Circuit's commitment is communicated to all our people fairly and responsibly including employees and potential employees, users of its services, and all those working for, or on behalf of, or providing a service to the Circuit including consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, apprentices, casual workers, agency workers and those on work experience placements;
- lead by example, encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion internally and externally;
- be responsible for creating 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 between all employees and colleagues, including service users/providers;
- ensure that those who they line manage attend equality, diversity and inclusion training periodically;
- be responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees and be given information and / or training to enable them to avoid the risk of discrimination in career development decisions.

All employees will:

- ensure that this policy is observed, promoted and applied in undertaking their work to serve the Circuit;
- be aware of their responsibilities and report inappropriate behaviour/s and raise any incident/s that potentially breach this policy with their Line Manager;

- familiarise themselves with this policy, ensuring that their practices are consistent with its contents;
- undertake Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within the Circuit's recruitment and selection procedures. This policy is committed to ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation at any stage of the recruitment process or in the terms and conditions offered to new employees or promoted employees.

Best practice calls for at least two thirds of the panel members to be trained in Recruitment and Unconscious Bias and to have attended Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training. The Chair of the Recruitment Panel will ensure that all panel members are aware of the fair recruitment principles and that they are sufficiently briefed to ensure full compliance with the Circuit's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Panel members have a duty to declare to the Chair of the Recruitment Panel if they already know a candidate. If they have a close personal or familial relationship with a candidate, they will withdraw from the panel.

All panel members must be able to attend every part of the selection process (including shortlisting, presentations, interviews etc.) for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all candidates.

The Circuit will fulfil its legal duties, ensuring that reasonable adjustments, where practicable, are made to ensure that individuals with a disability are not disadvantaged as part of the recruitment and selection process.

TRAINING

Anyone involved with making decisions about a person's employment must attend appropriate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.

All new employees must attend Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training as part of their induction programme.

Every current employee must attend regular Equality, Diversity and Inclusion updates and refresher training on at least an annual basis.

We expect all our people to proactively support any Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives by attending events and training organised by the Circuit to educate themselves on the challenges faced by others and how to help alleviate these in the workplace.

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

If any of our people believes that they have been subject to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation under this policy, then they may consult our Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy and raise the matter via our Grievance Procedure with their Line Manager. Where the concern relates to the Line Manager, the Line Manager's manager or a Circuit Officer may be notified.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be investigated in accordance with our Grievance or Disciplinary Procedure, as appropriate. Any of our people 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 our Disciplinary Procedure, as applicable.

Any employee who is found to have breached this policy (by committing, authorising or condoning an act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying) will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure (for those to whom it applies) and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in formal disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal. The Circuit takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the law and internal organisational requirements.

.....
January 2025