



in association with



**St. Peter's
Bournemouth**

The Civic and Parish Church of Bournemouth

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & DIVERSITY POLICY

Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

9th March 2017

Name: Bournemouth Town Centre Parish (hereafter, "The Church")

Church Address: Parish Office, St Peter's Church, Hinton Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2EE.
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Amended: 28th January 2023



1. Introduction

- 1.1 BTCP is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- 1.2 The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our beneficiaries, and for each employee/volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best.
- 1.3 BTCP in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.
- 1.4 BTCP aims to be an equal opportunities employer in all respects and in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. No job applicant, employee or worker will receive less favourable treatment in terms of direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of the nine protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.5 The Protected Characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. The policy of non-discrimination will also apply to membership or non-membership of a trade union and "spent convictions" of ex-offenders.
- 1.6 BTCP will follow the recommendations and Codes of Practice of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, embracing those previously provided by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission.
- 1.7 Assessment and consideration of job applicants, employees and workers will be based on objective and relevant criteria. Selection criteria and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- 1.8 The PCC will ensure that it applies its Equal Opportunities Policy in a fair and consistent manner to its recruitment practices. This will include open recruitment methods, which provide the opportunity for all potential candidates to apply without discrimination or restriction from sources such as press advertising, recruitment agencies, job centres, the careers' service, etc. All recruitment advertisements will be vetted prior to issue to ensure that they do not include anything which may be considered discriminatory in either words or images.
- 1.9 BTCP management will review the Equal Opportunities Policy and the BTCP's recruitment and selection practices at regular intervals to ensure full compliance with Statutory Codes of Practice.



- 1.10 All employees, as part of their induction training with the BTCP, will be familiarised with the BTCP's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 1.11 All employees will be given equal opportunity and, where appropriate and possible, special training to enable them to progress within the BTCP. BTCP is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective, to minimise the possibility of discrimination and finding means of combating it whenever it arises.

Definitions

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic which they have or are thought to have (i.e. perceptive discrimination), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (i.e. associative discrimination).

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition, rule, policy, practice or requirement is applicable within the organisation but which adversely affects or disadvantages a particular group who share a protected characteristic, more than others, and which cannot be justified or considered reasonable in terms of being a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim in running the business.

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. This is also applicable to harassment because of **perception** (i.e. although the person does not actually possess that characteristic, they are perceived as doing so by others) and **association** (i.e. because the person is associated with someone who possesses the characteristic).

Victimisation is defined as the singling out of an individual for bad treatment, or unfair action/sanction because they have made or supported an allegation or complaint, or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, they are not protected from victimisation if an untrue complaint was made or supported maliciously.

BTCP's Responsibility as an Employer and Provider

- 1.12 In order for this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to be fully effective, the responsibility for ensuring that its terms are adhered to will lie with the senior management. It is, however, the responsibility of each Manager and all other supervisory staff to actively promote equality of opportunity within their own programmes and spheres of responsibility. It should not be



overlooked that harassment can take many forms and may relate to any of the protected characteristics. Victimisation in the widest sense of the word is also a form of harassment and those exposed to or subject to such action need protection. If a Manager or Supervisor identifies any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation they should take immediate steps to investigate the matter and take appropriate action, regardless of whether or not a formal complaint has been made.

- 1.13 BTCP will inform its employees/volunteers of their responsibilities and opportunities under the Equality Act and will make sure that BTCP's Equal Opportunities Policy is known to all staff and applicants. All new staff will be informed of this at their induction and will receive copies of the policies which are contained in the Employee Handbook. The Employee Handbook containing these policies is provided for all employees/volunteers and the PCC encourages an open and consultative approach with all staff in order that views may be expressed, feedback obtained such that the effectiveness of the policy may be monitored and assessed.
- 1.14 The PCC will take disciplinary action against employees who are found to infringe the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Our Commitments

- 1.15 Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- 1.16 Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public

- 1.17 Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's



grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- 1.18 Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 1.19 Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 1.20 Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- 1.21 Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
- 1.22 Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

What BTCP expects from its Employees/Volunteers

- 1.23 While the main responsibility for providing equal opportunities lies with the BTCP, individual employees at all levels have responsibilities too. Eradicating discrimination depends on everyone's collaboration.
- 1.24 Employees/volunteers must not on any grounds harass, victimise, abuse or intimidate other employees or anyone else they come into contact with during the course of their work.
- 1.25 Employees/volunteers should co-operate with measures introduced by the PCC to make sure there is equal opportunity and non-discrimination. Employees must not victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information about discrimination or harassment.



Disability Discrimination

- 1.26 In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is BTCP policy not to discriminate against persons whether in, or applying for, employment, who have the protected characteristic of disability. The principles, responsibilities and steps to be taken are outlined in the Equal Opportunities Policy, but the following specific aspects also apply:

Definitions

Disability is where a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Discrimination occurs where a person receives less favourable treatment because of the protected characteristic of disability. This form of direct discrimination is wide enough to also embrace *associative discrimination* (where the person is associated with someone else who has a disability) and *discrimination by perception* (where they are thought to have, or are treated as if they have, a disability, even though they may not).

Discrimination also occurs where a person is treated unfavourably or suffers a disadvantage *arising from* their disability. As this would be as a consequence of an aspect of their disability, it would not be necessary to identify a comparator without such a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if it can be shown that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Procedures

- 1.27 Job advertisements will provide equal opportunity to all applicants and will not discriminate in any way.
- 1.28 Prior to offering a job, any questions relating to an applicant's health will be limited to those permitted under the Equality Act. i.e. to decide if adjustments are needed to enable the applicant to be assessed fairly; to establish if a person can carry out a function which is essential and 'intrinsic' to the job; to monitor the diversity of applicants; to take positive action to assist disabled people; to ensure a person has a disability where that is a genuine requirement for the job holder
- 1.29 Applicants for employment who have a disability will not be considered less favourably than those without disabilities. If appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be considered and made to enable the candidate to be assessed and/or interviewed fairly compared with non-disabled candidates.



- 1.30 Consideration will be given to making reasonable adjustments, where practicable, to the workplace and to methods of working, to accommodate disabled employees to enable them to overcome any disadvantage resulting from an impairment. In order to be able to do this, there is a responsibility on employees to make BTCP aware if they have any impairments/conditions, which may constitute a disability under the terms of the Act.
- 1.31 Appointments of disabled people will be made on the same terms and conditions as other comparable employees without disabilities.
- 1.32 Disabled employees will be given equal opportunity in applications for training and promotion and will not be considered any less favourably because of their disability.
- 1.33 Any acts of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of disability should be reported to the appropriate senior management.
- 1.34 Allegations of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of disability will be investigated and disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found to have acted in any way, which is in breach of this policy.

Age Equality

- 1.35 The PCC will provide a working environment free from discrimination on the grounds of age, and recognises the valuable contributions made by staff of all ages.
- 1.36 The PCC will not discriminate on the grounds of age in the way it recruits and selects staff. Advertisements will not state an age preference, unless it is to take positive action to invite applications from a group which is under-represented.
- 1.37 Dates of birth will only be requested from job applicants for monitoring purposes, or to comply with any specific legal requirement, or other external justifiable requirement.
- 1.38 All employees will have equal rights to training, promotion and other aspects of career development. Age will not be used to justify a failure to promote or train any employee, nor will it be used as a selection criterion in a redundancy situation.
- 1.39 In accordance with BTCP's Equal Opportunities Policy, any complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation relating to a person's age will be fully investigated, and in the event that such allegations are upheld, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

2. Agreement to follow this policy

- 2.1 The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by the trustees' senior management and has been agreed approved by Bournemouth Town Centre Parish.

3. Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

- 3.1 Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in BTCP Employee Handbook, Formal Disciplinary Procedure and Formal Grievance Procedure. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.
- 3.2 Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.