

EQUALITIES POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Church is committed to developing policies and practices to challenge discrimination and to promote equality throughout the Church. The Church affirms that it is fully committed to combat all forms of discrimination and oppression particularly on the grounds of race, colour or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or marital status, class, age, or disability. This policy applies to all those involved in the work of the Church.
- 1.2. The church will only discriminate on grounds of religious belief where it has a direct effect on the role of the individual in maintaining the life of the church as a fellowship of Baptist believers and in the nurture of others in the faith.
- 1.3. The church reserves the right in specific circumstances acceptable in law to discriminate on grounds of gender or sexual orientation where there is a genuine occupational requirement in relation to intimate personal or pastoral service provision.
- 1.4. The church will not discriminate against any with a history of criminal or immoral behaviour unless it is:
 - Bound by law to do so
 - Believes such behaviour places the fellowship, its staff or those in its care at immediate, unavoidable and unreasonable risk.
- 1.5. Commitment and adherence to this policy is a condition of employment for all employees and for all others involved with the Church in related capacities. Failure to adhere to the policy will be treated as a serious breach of the Church's principles and practices and could result in dismissal.

2. Implementation

- 2.1. The church's charity trustees have overall responsibility for Equality related matters and accepts their joint and several duty to support the ongoing application of the Equalities Policy, The Equality Act 2010 and subsequent Regulations, fully in terms of employment, training, application and review, including paid staff, volunteers and contractors and to ensure that ALL Other Church Committees, Working Groups etc.: appointed in the Church are aware of the Equalities Policy, of their responsibility to support it and to recognise the obligation of employees to adhere to it.
- 2.2. They have given their Chairman (Section 3) the duty to oversee observance and investigate any alleged breach and to ensure that
- 2.3. all employees are familiar with the Equalities Policy and that they are equipped to implement it in their working practice. If necessary, training will be made available to employees to support them in this.

3. Monitoring and Improvement

- 3.1. Anyone who observes discriminatory behaviour or feels they have been the subject of discrimination shall report the circumstances to the Chair of Trustees who will initiate a confidential investigation, with one or two other Trustees or members in good standing if he/she sees appropriate, and respond to the complainant, normally within 14 days, indicating any intended corrective action which will be taken in respect of policy, practice or individual behaviour.
- 3.2. The complainant may then request wider action or involvement of external bodies.
- 3.3. If the issue has legal implications the EMBA will be notified and advice sought; in all other cases mutually acceptable sources of arbitration and redress will be used if necessary (e.g. other local churches, voluntary sector or ACAS). A summary of all reports will be presented annually by the Chairman to the Board of Trustees.

This policy statement was adopted by a resolution of a Leaders (Trustees) Meeting dated

This policy statement was adopted by a resolution of a Leaders (Trustees) Meeting dated 4th October 2010

Procedural Guidelines may be added to detail the activities safeguarded through the above policy but may be varied by the responsible officers without higher sanction to achieve the underlying policy commitment . BU Guidance is under development.