



Equality and Diversity Policy (September 21)

1. INTRODUCTION

MK Christian Foundations is guided and driven by its mission and values. Our mission is:

- Growing people and community through social enterprise

And our values are that all people and all things:

- have an essential value and inherent potential;
- need to be contributing, learning, changing and growing;
- are connected and interdependent .

This means that promoting equality and valuing diversity and holding them at the heart of everything we do is fundamental to the pursuit of our mission. In 'growing people' we know it is essential that all people are given a fair chance and are treated fairly (Equality) and that 'growing community' can only be achieved if difference is valued and celebrated (Diversity).

We recognise that in our communities, society and world many are discriminated against and treated unfairly because of factors such as race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, national origin, age and disability. This discrimination is overt and covert, conscious and unconscious, deliberate and accidental, personal and structural.

MK Christian Foundation will, as an employer and a provider of services within our community, seek to be proactive in promoting equality and diversity and in challenging unfair discrimination or the less favourable treatment of anyone.

Any incidents involving discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation will be taken seriously and could provide grounds for disciplinary action that may lead to dismissal or exclusion from MK Christian Foundation, its premises and its services.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Legislation in relation to equality and diversity was brought together in the 2010 Equality Act

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations.

The Act identifies 9 characteristics which are protected, making it illegal to discriminate, harass or victimise based on these characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race



- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation are defined as follows:

- **Direct discrimination:** This occurs where, because of a protected characteristic, a person receives worse treatment than someone who does not have that characteristic. For example, an employee is turned down for a job because their manager believes that their sexual orientation will prevent them gaining their team's respect. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.
- **Discrimination by association:** This is discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example a man is treated less favourably at an event because of his friendship with an individual who is transgender.
- **Perception discrimination:** This is discrimination against an individual because others think (incorrectly) that they possess a protected characteristic. For example an employee is not offered the chance to represent her company at a major event because her line manager believes she has mental health issues.
- **Indirect discrimination:** This occurs when there is a policy or a practice that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic compared with people who do not have that characteristic. For example including unnecessary criteria in a person specification that could increase the barriers for those with certain characteristics to applying.
- **Harassment:** This is unwanted conduct related to a 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 (See AIUK's bullying and harassment policy).
- **Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else because they have complained about discrimination, or are suspected of doing so or have supported someone else who has.

3. SCOPE

3.1. This policy applies to all members of the MKCF community, irrespective of whether or not they are on MKCF premises.

- All members of staff
- All volunteers
- All trainees
- All visitors
- All contractors
- All persons working or acting on our behalf



4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Disability is defined by the Equality Act as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means has lasted, or is expected to last, for 12 months. Included in this definition are:
- Physical impairments (including asthma, diabetes, epilepsy etc.)
 - Sensory impairments such as hearing impairment or visual impairment
 - Severe facial disfigurement
 - Progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection
 - People who have had impairment in the past but have since recovered (such as cancer, mental health issues).
- 4.2 Diversity means the valuing of differences in individuals' attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences. Diversity recognises and celebrates difference as something which is positive and beneficial to us all.
- 4.3 Equality means making sure that people are treated fairly and given fair chances. It is not about treating everyone the same. Achieving equality of outcomes means meeting different needs in different ways.
- 4.4 Gender Reassignment relates to where a person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process to change their sex.
- 4.5 Race refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. It includes Anglo-Roma Gypsies, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Travellers.
- 4.6 Religion or Belief refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- 4.7 Sex refers to whether a person is a man or a woman (of any age).
- 4.8 Sexual Orientation: Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- 5.1. To build an organisational culture that is welcoming to all, tolerant, open and inclusive, where people feel safe, where difference is accepted and the contributions of all are encouraged, valued and respected;
- 5.2. To attract staff, trainees, volunteers and customers, that reflect the diverse communities in which we operate;
- 5.3. To be an organisation with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.



6. RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff, trainees, volunteers and customers have a responsibility to:

- Be welcoming to all, tolerant, open and inclusive
- Treat others with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Report discrimination, bullying, unfair treatment or harassment that they witness or experience
- Make the organisation aware of any policy or practice that is discriminatory

In addition we expect all staff to:

- Model behaviours that support this policy
- Challenge prejudice, discriminatory behaviour, harassment and victimisation
- Promote awareness of equality and diversity through educational materials and enterprise activities

Staff in leadership and management roles are responsible for:

- Acting as champions for equality and diversity
- Ensuring that their teams and those for whom they are responsible are aware of the expectations of this policy
- Seeing that good practice in promoting equality and diversity is shared
- Regular review and discussion of the performance of their team in promoting of equality and diversity, keeping it at the heart of the organisation's activities
- Ensuring that any allegations, concerns or failures in respect of equality and diversity are addressed quickly and effectively through training or our disciplinary procedures
- Ensuring that all materials: marketing; educational or otherwise are free from discriminatory images or text and positively promote diversity

Our HR and Client Support Staff will be responsible for:

- Having in place recruitment process and procedures that ensure access for people from across our community to our services and employment with us
- Developing monitoring processes that check that everyone is being treated fairly and equally
- That all staff and trainees receive an induction that makes them aware of their responsibilities and rights in relation to our equality and diversity policy and relevant legislation.

Our Director and Board have a responsibility for

- Keeping equality and diversity at the heart of the organisations activities
- Ensuring that this policy is delivered
- Providing strong leadership on equality and diversity
- Putting in place organisation level training on equality and diversity

7. DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION, PREJUDICE, HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

7.1. If you feel you have been the subject of discrimination, bullying, unfair treatment, harassment or victimisation or witnessed any such behaviour toward others, please take action immediately by speaking to a member of staff, a line manager or the Director.



Depending on the nature of the incident this will trigger activation of our:

- Disciplinary;
- Grievance
- or Complaints procedures

All of these contain opportunities to seek further action should you not be satisfied by the management of your concern. In the event that your concern is of a systemic or repeated nature you may wish to speak directly to the Director, the Board or to use the Whistle-blowing policy.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

There will be a range of processes in place to monitor our performance of this policy:

- With respect to our training, equality and diversity is a core element of our annual Self-Assessment Review (SAR). This will look at 'hard' data in respect of the recruitment and performance of trainees as well as gathering 'softer' evidence of how well we have promoted equality and diversity in our training and work experience activities.
- We will annually review our data in respect of the recruitment and appointment of staff.

Both these reviews will be presented to the Board who will also ensure that this policy itself is reviewed annually also.