

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Kerith Community Church is an equal opportunity employer.

The Church is committed to ensuring equal opportunities, fairness of treatment, dignity, work-life balance and the elimination of all forms of discrimination in the workplace for all staff and job applicants. The Church aims to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. Therefore the Church has adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

A key objective of the policy is so that the Church can provide a working environment in which people feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated with respect and dignity.

It is the Church's stated policy to treat all workers and job applicants equally and fairly irrespective of their sex, marital status, civil partnership status, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, culture, religion, age, or disability ("protected characteristics" as per the Equality Act 2010).

As a Christian organisation, 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 genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented in accordance with Employment and Race Directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional. It may also, in some cases, occur by association - ie where a person is put at a disadvantage due to a characteristic of another person.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, for example, a requirement for GCSE English as a selection criterion. This would have a disparately adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is needed is to demonstrate a reasonable level of literacy.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is also prohibited. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-Harassment policy.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, suppliers and former staff members.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Church undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

A Disclosure is only requested if relevant for the position concerned. 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.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent separately and in confidence to the Recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to, as part of the recruitment process.

By using an umbrella organisation to administer our DBS checks, we ensure that those involved in the recruitment process have support to identify and assess the relevance of offences within the legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders - eg. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Unless the nature of the position allows questioning about your entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.

Every person undergoing a DBS check will be made aware of the DBS Code of Practice and a copy will be available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.

The Church is also committed to ensuring that no policy, procedure, provision, rule, requirement, condition or criterion will be imposed on any worker or job applicant without justification if it would be likely to put that person at a disadvantage on any of the above grounds.

This equal opportunities policy applies to all stages of the recruitment and selection process, as well as throughout individuals' employment.

All staff who have responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion, or who supervise other staff, will receive equal opportunities training. Other staff will have the opportunity to attend awareness training in equality and the avoidance of discrimination.

Overall responsibility for this policy and equal opportunities training lies with the Human Resources Manager.

The Church will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives and as part of this process will monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of staff.

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Human Resources Manager.

Last updated: November 2015

Date of next review: November 2018