

Equal Opportunities Policy *(Version 4)*

Reviewed by the Board: 10/01/2023

Purpose

The purpose of this Equal Opportunities Policy is to communicate our commitment to equality of opportunity in both employment and in the provision of goods and services, with the aims of ensuring that all employees, job applicants, volunteers and supporters are treated fairly and equally, and supporting New Day Church's objective of providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers within New Day Church, including employees, volunteers, temporary workers and contractors. All staff and volunteers are expected to put this policy into practice.

A copy of this policy can be found in the Church Office along with all other policies and is available to all staff and volunteers. Job seekers and applicants will be sent a copy of the policy on request.

Any questions about the policy should be directed to the Board.

This policy does not form part of employees' contracts of employment and New Day Church may amend it at any time.

The policy is annually reviewed and may be amended at any time.

Policy statement

New Day Church is committed to providing equality in the workplace and all opportunities for, and during employment, will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, gender, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation. We aim to create a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which all staff, church members, visitors and contractors are treated with dignity and respect.

New Day Church will not unlawfully discriminate in the arrangements we make for recruitment and selection or in the opportunities afforded for employment, training or any other benefit. All decisions will be made fairly and objectively. We aim, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that all our working practices are applied fairly and consistently and, where necessary,

we will take reasonable steps to avoid or overcome any particular disadvantage these may cause and to promote equality.

Exceptions to New Day Church's Equal Opportunities Policy relate to the specific Christian nature of the church. Where the nature of the employment with the Church is seen, clearly, to require a Christian commitment and agreement with our Statement of Faith and supporting documents and this requirement is so stated; the Church shall be entitled to have regard to any such requirement. This Occupational Requirement will be stated in any advertisement for such a position with the words, "An Occupational Requirement exists for the post-holder to be a practicing Christian adhering to the tenets of the Christian faith as set out in our Statement of Faith and supporting documents, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010."

Care will be taken to regularly review the situation and assess, prior to advertising any position of employment, whether the nature of the position or its context means that an occupational requirement is i) necessary; and ii) that it is proportionate to apply the requirement in respect of the position.

Specific Responsibilities

The Board of New Day Church has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation and for observing relevant Codes of Practice.

The Board is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy and for ensuring that all employment-related policies, procedures and practices adhere to this policy.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility not to discriminate or harass other staff, volunteers, clients, customers and contractors and to report any such behaviour of which they become aware to the Board of Trustees.

The Board is responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy and must apply the policy as part of their day-to-day management of New Day Church.

Forms of discrimination

The following are forms of discrimination that this policy aims to avoid:

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they either have or are thought to have. Direct discrimination can also occur by way of association, which is when a person is treated less favourably because, for example, their spouse or partner or other relative has the protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on people who share a particular protected characteristic. A person with the protected characteristic who is disadvantaged in that way has the right to complain.

To be justified the provision, criterion, or practice must be necessary for legitimate charity reasons in circumstances where less discriminatory alternatives are not reasonably available.

Victimisation occurs where someone is treated unfavourably because he/she has raised a complaint under this policy or taken legal action, in relation to any alleged act of unlawful discrimination, against New Day Church or because he/she has supported someone else in doing this.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can take many different forms and may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments, emails or physical contact that causes offence or are objectionable.

Harassment may involve a single incident or persistent behaviour that extends over a period of time and can occur even if someone did not mean to cause offence. It also means that a person can be subjected to harassment by behaviour that is not aimed at them directly but which they nonetheless find unpleasant.

Harassment is always unacceptable and where it relates to a protected characteristic it will amount to an unlawful act of discrimination.

New Day Church operates a Bullying and Harassment Policy which provides additional clarification and procedures for addressing harassing behaviour.

Discrimination arising from Disability - In addition to the above, it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of something that is the result, effect or outcome of their disability, unless the treatment is necessary and can be objectively justified. Furthermore, employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled applicants, employees or other workers are not substantially disadvantaged.

Creating equal opportunities in the workplace

There are a number of ways in which New Day Church aims to ensure equal opportunities in the workplace, including:

Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection procedures will be free from bias or discrimination. Recruitment procedures will be conducted objectively and will be based upon specific and reasonable job-related criteria. Decisions regarding an individual's suitability for a particular role will be based on aptitude and ability.

We will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that disabled applicants are not substantially disadvantaged.

Wherever possible, vacancies will be advertised as being suitable for flexible working, to encourage applications from individuals seeking work on a part time or job share basis.

New Day Church operates a Safe Recruitment Policy which provides additional clarification and procedures for recruitment and selection.

Career development and training

Staff and Volunteers will be given an appropriate induction to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of their role.

Staff and volunteers will be encouraged to develop their full potential and we will not unreasonably deny anyone access to training or other career development opportunities. These will be determined objectively, taking into account the needs of the charity and available resources.

Selection for promotion will be based on objective criteria and decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Terms and conditions

Our terms and conditions of service will be applied fairly and benefits and facilities will be made available to all staff who should have access to them, as appropriate.

Terms and conditions of employment for part-time staff will be provided on a pro-rata basis to full-time employees. Similarly the terms and conditions for fixed term employees will be comparable with those given to permanent employees, except when different treatment can be objectively justified.

Employment policies and practices

New Day Church aims to ensure that employment policies and practices, including any rules or requirements, do not directly or indirectly discriminate and are applied in a non-discriminatory manner. In particular we will ensure that all disciplinary decisions are fair and consistent and that selection for redundancy is based on objective criteria.

New Day Church will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the working environment or any work arrangements that would alleviate any substantial disadvantage these cause disabled staff.

We will aim as far as reasonably practicable to accommodate the requirements of different religions and cultures and will consider requests from employees to vary or change their working hours to enable them to care for a dependant.

Working environment

All individuals have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and New Day Church takes reasonable steps to protect staff from discrimination, bullying or harassment and, in the event of a complaint, we will take appropriate action to prevent, as far as possible, a further occurrence.

All staff are encouraged to report any incidents of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour at work or that occurs during the course of employment, on or off premises, including at work social events (whether organised by New Day Church or not) or at formal or informal events involving staff or other work-related contacts.

New Day Church has a separate Bullying and Harassment Policy and procedure for dealing with complaints of harassment.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

New Day Church will monitor the effectiveness of this policy at least annually to ensure it is achieving its objectives.

Information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

Raising a complaint of discrimination

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you should raise the matter in accordance with New Day Church's Grievance Procedure. A copy of the Grievance Procedure can be found in the Office. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter under New Day Church's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, or breached this policy in any other way, will be subject to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, up to and including dismissal. Non-employees will be subject to appropriate formal action that may, depending on the circumstances, involve terminating any contract or agreement.

New Day Church will also take seriously any malicious or, in its opinion, unwarranted allegations of discrimination and will take appropriate action, disciplinary or otherwise, where necessary.