

St Mary's with St Francis, Hinckley

Equal Opportunities Policy

Statement of Intent

Why we have adopted an equal opportunities policy and what we intend to do

Jesus in His life and ministry embraced equal opportunities and rejected discrimination. This policy has been adopted in the hope of following Christ's example, and with the intent of complying with our moral and legal¹ responsibility to promote equality of opportunity in all our work.

This policy aims to ensure that the following matters are considered / available to all, in an equitable way, without discrimination, and without anyone being disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable:

- Recruitment and selection
- Training and consideration for promotion
- Treatment in employment within our church, for both those who are paid and voluntary
- Access to membership of our councils, committees and other groups
- Access to benefits, facilities, and the services we provide

The Parish is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment, and all employees, workers and job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religious or political affiliation, lay or ordained status, or any other matter which cannot be shown to be a necessary requirement of the job or office concerned. However, in order to ensure the centrality of Christ in our teachings and actions, there will be circumstances justifying different treatment which is not immoral or unlawful, and the church council affirms its right to appoint people who have chosen a Christian faith commitment (and are living this out in a way commensurate with the understanding of the Parish) to positions where the nature of the post makes this appropriate.

Code of Practice

Describes what we will do to implement the statement of intent

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the implementation and operation of equal opportunities in the administration and activities of the parish. That is, associated with St Mary's church, and the St Francis Community Centre. However, all staff, volunteers and members of the church community, have a duty to do everything they can to ensure that the Policy operates in practice. The PCC will bring to the attention of all members, staff and volunteers the provisions of the policy and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the Policy.

The PCC will review this policy annually to ensure effective implementation. Anyone connected with the parish, for example as an employee, volunteer, service user, or customer, who considers that they are suffering from unequal treatment on any grounds may use this policy to bring it to the PCC's attention, for consideration and remedy. This process can be initiated by contacting the priest in charge, one of the churchwardens, or through the Parish Office at the address below.

Part-time and fixed-term employees will be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

The Parish will take positive measures to combat unlawful discrimination (whether direct or indirect) against any employee, worker, volunteer, or against any user of any service that we offer. In practice, this will mean that we will:

- Take steps to ensure that our parish buildings are accessible and usable by all.
- Seek to encourage those sections of our community who are under-represented into a fuller participation in parish life.
- Ensure particular care is taken to properly deal with any complaints of discrimination.
- Ensure entry to employment, promotion, or change of post is determined by personal merit and ability relevant to the purposes of the Parish.
- Aim to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to enter employment. In doing so, it will fully consider reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. In addition, if staff members become disabled in the course of their employment, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain in the employment of the Parish.
- Work to make sure that no individual, or organisation connected with church activities, hinders the positive implementation of this policy. Any form of unlawful discrimination is strictly unacceptable.

Any employee may complain about discriminatory conduct using the grievance procedures of the Church of England. However, they should try to resolve the matter informally and through the PCC in the first instance. No individual will be penalised for raising a grievance unless it is proved to be untrue and made in bad faith in which case it will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under Disciplinary Procedure.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

The PCC affirms its right with regard to parish buildings, to only allow their use in a way that is consistent with trust deeds and user policy.

Code of Conduct

A statement making expectations clear

During parish activities, such as those taking place within St Mary's church, the St Francis Community Centre, or other parish premises, members of the church community will seek to uphold their Christian values, and everyone will be expected to:

- Treat people with dignity and respect, regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age.
- Value and respect the feelings of others. Language or humour that people find offensive will not be used, e.g. sexist or racist jokes or terminology that is deemed derogatory.
- Not harass, abuse, exclude or intimidate anyone, on the grounds of their race, gender, age, nationality, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

¹ Legal duties are defined in the Equality Act 2010