



## **Equality, Discrimination and Inclusion Policy for Leaside Church & Community Centre, Ware, Hertfordshire**

### **Policy Statement**

Leaside Church & Community Centre believes that all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day.

### **Purpose**

In accordance with the Leaside Church & Community Centre's commitment to issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion all its lay employees (which term shall include all volunteers, secondees, consultants, suppliers, contractors and agency workers, whether permanent or temporary) and ministers have a duty to act in accordance with this Policy so as to prevent, reduce and stop all forms of unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") and to ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, benefits, pay, terms and conditions of employment, redundancy and dismissals are determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity and so create an environment free from discrimination.

### **Definition of Discrimination**

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of: race; sex; pregnancy and maternity; marital or civil partnership status; gender reassignment; disability; religion or beliefs; age; or sexual orientation. These nine "protected characteristics" are identified in the Act. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and includes discrimination by perception and association.

### **Types of Discrimination**

#### *Direct Discrimination*

This occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats a person less favourably than another on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

#### *Indirect Discrimination*

This is the application of a policy, criterion or practice which the employer applies to all employees but is such that:

- it is detrimental to a considerably larger proportion of people from the group that the person the employer is applying it to represents;
- the employer cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on a neutral basis; and
- the person to whom the employer is applying it suffers detriment from the application of the policy.

### *Harassment*

This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

### *Victimisation*

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have brought or intend to bring proceedings or they have given or intend to give evidence.

## **Statement of Intent**

Leaside Church and Community Centre seeks to eradicate less favourable treatment in these areas by endeavouring to:

- Build inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity and respect and have equality of opportunity to contribute their gifts to the common life;
- Identify and remove barriers to participation in employment, training, promotion, leadership and representation on church committees and in the attitudes and actions of every member of the congregation;
- Take positive action to counter attitudes and practices contrary to this statement of intent;
- Define within the law when being of a particular religion or belief is a requirement for any post within the church;
- Monitor progress in fulfilling these requirements.

## **Responsibility**

Leaside Church & Community Centre takes responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and endeavours to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.

Employees may be held independently and individually liable by Leaside Church & Community Centre for their discriminatory acts and in some circumstances an Employment Tribunal may order them to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts. For employees of Leaside Church & Community Centre, failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Any employee who believes that s/he has been subject to discrimination should discuss the matter with his/her line manager. If this does not resolve the matter, then s/he should use the Grievance Procedure.

Further guidance concerning this policy can be obtained from the Employment Adviser of the Eastern Synod of the United Reformed Church.

*This policy is adapted from the Equalities Policy adopted by Mission Council 2006 and reported to General Assembly 2008.*