



PCC 8/3/18

Equal Opportunities Policy – adopted (.....)

Introduction

Saint Stephen's recognises that the United Kingdom is a society diverse in race, culture and interests and that this diversity is to be welcomed. We intend that all members of society should enjoy equal access to the opportunities available through the work of the Church and community.

Discrimination operates through commonly held assumptions and prejudices that are reinforced by laws, rules and customs. This makes discrimination appear normal and inevitable. Discrimination works by stereotyping people into different roles, by treating some people worse than others, or simply by ignoring them.

Saint Stephen's is committed to opposing all forms of discrimination including that based on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, sex and sexual orientation, and including - subject to the overwhelming priority as a Christian community of its commitment to presenting the Christian faith and adhering to the Church Representation Rules and Canon Law of the Church of England - religion and belief.

Policy implementation

Saint Stephen's is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of the operation of its ministry including management, employment practices with both paid and unpaid workers, access to ministry and service provision.

Saint Stephen's shall ensure that it acts in such a way that no individual or group referred to in this policy is discriminated against. In particular, Saint Stephen's will:

- Make arrangements to accommodate the needs of PCC members
- Provide information in a way that is accessible to all
- Meet in premises, when possible, with facilities which are physically accessible to all those participating
- Encourage representation on the PCC of all groups facing discrimination for whom the church is relevant
- Make training in discrimination awareness and equal opportunities available to all if requested

Recruitment

The recruitment of paid staff and volunteers shall be undertaken in accordance with this policy. In particular by:

- Preparing job descriptions and role profiles which clearly set out what the worker/volunteer is to do, and person specifications which recognise that relevant experience can be as valuable as qualifications or previous paid employment
- Ensuring that in all selection procedures only factors relevant to the requirements of the role are taken into account, and that the spirit of the Policy Statement is adhered to

Provision of services

In every aspect of the planning, management, access, provision and monitoring of services, Saint Stephen's shall seek to promote equality of opportunity in accordance with this Policy by:

- Improving physical access to the church for all individuals
- Seeking to identify and respond to the needs of those groups experiencing discrimination, altering priorities and methods of service delivery where necessary and appropriate
- Seeking the views of parishioners and others and by ensuring a fair and accessible system of elections onto the PCC in accord with Church of England Policies
- Providing training relevant to the needs of staff and volunteers designed to enable them to carry out their jobs
- Ensuring that any staff member or volunteer who, in the course of their role displays attitudes contrary to this policy to any person whether by word, behaviour or other manner shall be counselled and, in extreme cases, liable to disciplinary action
- Recognising and responding to the individual needs of staff or volunteers, especially those who are carers or who have disabilities, and ensuring that, within available resources, the necessary support is provided to enable them to work effectively

This policy document will be reviewed annually by the PCC.