

Equality and Diversity Policy

Inn Churches is a Christian-based organisation. As such we believe that all men and women are made in the image of God. God's command to "Love your neighbour as yourself" is universal. We believe that everybody has a valuable contribution to make and that all individuals should be encouraged and enabled to contribute and participate fully in society.

We recognise that in our society groups and individuals have been, and continue to be, discriminated against based on various protected characteristics:

- age
- gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- pregnancy and maternity
- disability
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

We believe that discrimination on any ground whatsoever is unacceptable. We will make every effort to prevent discrimination or other unfair treatment against any current or potential staff member, volunteer or guest / service user, either on the basis of the protected characteristics above, or in relation to trade union activities, working patterns, contract status, responsibility for dependants or family members, or offending background (so long as there is no risk to children or vulnerable adults).

Our aim is, therefore, to provide genuine equality of opportunity for our staff, volunteers and the guests who use our services, as well as celebrating and promoting diversity in our work. All workers are expected to behave in a way that promotes fairness, equality and dignity at work.

We will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision and delivery. All workers have a responsibility to ensure that guests, volunteers and visitors are treated with dignity and respect and we will endeavour to ensure that our services respond appropriately to the needs of all sections of our community. We recognise that this will involve careful monitoring of the use of our services and may result in the development of positive action programmes to target the needs of specific groups within the community around us.

We will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in recruitment and employment practice, and will endeavour to ensure that our structures and committees represent all sections of the community. As a Christian-based organisation, we require staff to respect the Christian faith and to share a vision of the organisation as the visible expression of care with a Christian ethic of respect and love for all regardless of creed, race, age or gender.

We recognise the importance of training in assisting the Trustees, staff and volunteers to understand and operate effective equality and diversity practices, enabling them to meet the requirements of all those who wish to use our services, as well as developing their own skills and abilities to full advantage. Training also increases awareness to recognise and to deal with oppression, racism or discrimination when observed or experienced.

Workers should be sensitive to the effects their words and actions have on others, and ensure that their attitudes to others carry no trace of unlawful discrimination which can affect relationships, behaviour or judgement. They are expected to consider what behaviour is appropriate for the person they are with and recognise that what is acceptable to one person may be regarded as unacceptable by another. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and will be treated seriously in line with our disciplinary policy.

We will make reasonable adjustments for workers with a disability where possible and appropriate to do so, and take positive action within the principles of the Equality Acts to promote the employment of individuals with a disability.

We will ensure that workers have adequate support to deal with discrimination in their work. We will provide a mechanism for workers and guests to register complaints where necessary. Complaints will be dealt with promptly in line with our Complaints Policy.

We are committed to efficient monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective implementation of this policy, and to working positively and proactively to achieve its aims. We will consult with our staff and volunteers on the development of our services on a regular basis.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: definitions and types of discrimination

Direct discrimination: treating somebody less favourably because of one of the protected characteristics. An exception is a Genuine Employment Requirement, for example where it is essential for an employee to be of a particular sex where the duties of the post include personal care for a person of the same sex.

Discrimination by perception: treating somebody less favourably based on a mistaken opinion that they possess a particular protected characteristic.

Discrimination by association: treating somebody less favourably based on somebody they associate with.

Indirect discrimination: where an apparently neutral action or practice is applied equally to a group, but which *unjustifiably* puts a protected group at a disadvantage, for example specifying that 10 years' experience is required which younger workers may find it harder to comply with. Indirect discrimination may be justified if there is a legitimate, objective reason for the requirement to be in place.

Victimisation: treating somebody less favourably because they have, in good faith, complained or intended to complain about discrimination or because they have given evidence in relation to another person's complaint.

Harassment: unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Conduct may be harassment regardless of whether it was intended to be offensive: once a recipient has made it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable it will be classed as harassment.

Bullying: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which, through the abuse or misuse of power, makes the recipient feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated or threatened.