

Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Key principles

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, as outlawed by the Equality Act 2010:

- age
- disability
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership *
- being pregnant or on maternity leave *

These protected characteristics, except for the last two (*), may also form the basis of harassment.

We also recognise that people may face discrimination for other reasons, such as language, health or health status, neurodiversity, trade union membership, working hours or contracts (including flexible working), caring responsibilities, class or background, financial health, where they live, how they speak, or other social, educational or economic factors. This policy will also apply to those circumstances, and this list is neither definitive nor exhaustive.

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 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 service users, as well as celebrating and promoting diversity in our work. All staff and volunteers are expected to behave in a way that promotes fairness, equality and dignity.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, service users and visitors.

Definitions

This policy uses the following terms:

Equality is about *removing barriers*, ensuring that everybody has an equal opportunity to access and use our services with dignity and respect.

Equity takes this further and is about *treating everybody fairly*, recognising that people's needs differ and that to ensure equality of opportunity people may need to be treated differently, making sure that no person or community is disadvantaged or discriminated against by unwitting barriers.

Diversity is about *recognising and celebrating people's differences*, embedding knowledge about and comfort with difference into our practice, affirming that differences should be respected, recognised and valued in order to enrich the charity.

Inclusion is an approach and practice designed to *bring people together*, drawing together equality, equity and diversity to provide the conditions for people to feel included and welcomed regardless of their background, providing a sense of belonging and authenticity.

Our practice

Equality, equality, diversity and inclusion are central to Inn Churches' mission, and are ultimately the responsibility of the Trustees. Implementation, monitoring and evaluating this policy in terms of employment practice and service delivery are delegated to the Management Team, as is responsibility for keeping the Trustees informed of this policy's implementation and the implications of their decisions and policies for equity, equality, diversity and inclusion issues.

We will ensure that none of our policies discriminate against any group or individual, either directly or indirectly.

We will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision and delivery. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that service users, 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 ensure that our services are accessible to all sections of the communities we serve, and in particular to those most at social, economic or educational disadvantage.

We are committed to equality of opportunity, valuing and embracing diversity and seeking to provide staff and volunteers with the opportunity for meaningful, rewarding work and personal development on the basis of ability, qualifications, suitability and potential to be developed. We believe that people from different backgrounds can bring varied ideas, thinking and approaches which improve our work.

We will endeavour to ensure that our structures and committees represent all sections of the community, including through a broad and representative board of trustees. 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 that discrimination is unacceptable, and have therefore adopted this Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, and seek to implement the requirements of The Equality Act 2010 which makes it illegal to discriminate against somebody because of the protected characteristics listed above. Breaches of the policy (which could include the condoning of such discrimination) will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action. We also aim to provide appropriate support to anybody who makes a complaint of such behaviour.

We will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in recruitment and employment practice, and that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be justified in the context of this policy. Recruitment, selection, employment, training and promotion practices will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they comply with this policy.

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.

We will ensure that this policy is made available to all staff and volunteers, as well as to service users and members of the public who may wish to view it.

Staff and volunteers 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 staff and volunteers with a disability where possible and appropriate to do so, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and take positive action within the principles of The Equality Act 2010 to promote the employment of individuals with a disability. This may include flexible working requests, which we will endeavour to agree to providing that it doesn't negatively impact the needs of the organisation.

We will ensure that staff and volunteers have adequate support to deal with discrimination in their work. We will provide a mechanism for staff, volunteers and service users to register complaints where necessary. Complaints will be dealt with promptly in line with our Complaints Policy. Any complaints about discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying involving staff will be dealt with through the Grievance and Disciplinary procedures contained in our Employment Policy.

When staff, trustees or volunteers represent Inn Churches on the committees of other bodies or agencies, they are expected to try to ensure that equity, equality, diversity and inclusion principles and practices are implemented by those other bodies or agencies.

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

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

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.

Harassment: the Equality Act 2010 defines three types of harassment:

- unwanted conduct relating to protected characteristics, 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.
- sexual harassment, which is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. It does not need to be related to a protected characteristic.
- less favourable treatment as a result of harassment, which is when someone experiences less favourable treatment because of how they responded to previous sexual harassment, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

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.