

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *The Village Metropolitan Community Church (hereafter 'Village MCC')* believes that humans are all created in the image of God, are valued equally by God, and are equally responsible to God for the way we treat each other.

1.2 *Village MCC* is fully committed to implement Equal Opportunities Policies in all aspects of its work and relationships with others.

1.3 *Village MCC* will ensure that all staff, volunteers, members and visitors receive equal consideration, and is committed to the elimination of unlawful or unfair discrimination on any grounds including those of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, responsibility for dependants, religion, state of health (e.g. HIV/AIDS, epilepsy), social class, trade union activity and age.

### 2. DESCRIPTIONS

2.1 We are aware that individuals and groups of people are sometimes discriminated against, both directly and indirectly, in unjustifiable ways.

2.2 There are four categories of discrimination which are defined as follows:

2.2.1 Direct Discrimination results from treating a person less favourably on any grounds including those of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, responsibility for dependants, religion, state of health (e.g. HIV/AIDS, epilepsy), social class, trade union activity and age.

2.2.2 Indirect Discrimination arises where a condition or requirement, although applied equally to the above groups, has the effect of excluding, penalising or treating less favourably any of these groups and cannot be shown to be justified and will be to the detriment of those who cannot comply with it.

2.2.3 Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than others are (or would be) treated in the same circumstances, because they have, or intend to do (or the discriminator knows/suspects that they have, or intend to do) any of the following in relation to the discriminator or any other person:

Take proceedings under the legislation

Give/n evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the legislation

Otherwise done anything under, or by reference to the legislation

Alleged that the discriminator or any other person has committed an act which would amount to a contravention of the legislation. Although under the legislation the acts prohibited by the victimisation provisions cover only the range of activities that the legislation covers, *Village MCC* considers any form of victimisation on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, etc., to be in breach of this policy.

2.2.4 Harassment is defined as any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, directed to an

individual, that is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient and that might threaten a person's security or create an intimidating environment.

### **3. EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF**

3.1 No condition or requirement will be applied to any applicant for employment or any staff member in the course of his/her employment which is, or may be, unlawfully, unfairly or unreasonably to their disadvantage on any grounds including those of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, responsibility for dependants, religion, state of health (e.g. HIV/AIDS, epilepsy), social class, trade union activity and age (up to 65). Furthermore, applicants for employment and staff members will not be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be justified within the aims and purposes of *Village MCC*.

3.2 Entry to employment and promotion or change of post within *Village MCC* is determined by personal merit and ability relevant to the aims and purposes of *Village MCC*.

3.3 If a member of staff believes that they have been discriminated against it is their responsibility to report the matter to their immediate superior or to the most appropriate person in authority. All allegations of discrimination will be treated seriously.

3.4 The member of staff should take their complaint to *Village MCC's* Board of Trustees. If the Trustees fail to deal with the allegation satisfactory, the member of staff should contact the Metropolitan Community Church regional office.

### **4. SERVICE USERS**

4.1 No condition or requirement will be applied to any service user which is, or may be, unlawfully, unfairly or unreasonably to their disadvantage on any grounds including those of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, responsibility for dependants, religion, state of health (e.g. HIV/AIDS, epilepsy), social class, trade union activity and age.

4.2 If a service user believes that they have been discriminated against it is their right make a complaint. These should be in written form addressed to the Pastor.

4.3 The service user has the right to take their complaint to *Village MCC's* Board of Trustees if the above procedure fails to provide satisfaction.

4.4 If the Trustees fail to deal with the complaint satisfactory, the service provider has the right to take their complaint to the Metropolitan Community Church Judiciary Process or Regional Elder.

### **5. STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS**

5.1 As an employer *Village MCC* is aware of its legal obligations which are covered in the following acts:

Equal Pay Act 1970

Working Time Regulations 1998

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Race Relations Act 1976 Race Relations Act (Amendment) 2000

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, amending the Sex Discrimination Act 1999

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and subsequent regulations

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Equality Act 2006 and subsequent legislation arising from its implementation.

## **6. POLICY MONITORING**

6.1 *Village MCC* will collect and monitor records of the sex, disability and ethnic origin of all those applying to it for employment and use of its services.

6.2 These findings will be used to produce statistical information, to ensure *Village MCC* and all its staff, volunteers, users, members, committee members and visitors are receiving equal consideration, and to continue in its commitment of the elimination of unlawful or unfair discrimination on any grounds including those of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, responsibility for dependants, religion, state of health (e.g. HIV/AIDS, epilepsy), social class, trade union activity and age.

## **7. POLICY APPLICATION AND REVIEW**

7.1 It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this policy.