

Crossways Church Fellowship

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Created Version 27 May 26)

Scope & Context

Crossways Church Fellowship (CCF) is committed to promoting **equality, diversity and inclusion** among our staff and volunteers, and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. Our aim is for our staff, leadership and volunteer teams to be representative of the wider community, and for every individual to feel respected, valued, and able to give their best.

In providing services to the community, CCF is also committed to ensuring that no member of the public is subjected to unlawful discrimination.

Every staff and leadership team member and volunteer has a personal responsibility to uphold this policy. Any questions about its application should be directed to the CCF Trustees.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide **equality, fairness and respect** for all in employment and voluntary roles, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.
- Ensure that no one is unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of the **protected characteristics** defined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- Oppose and prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination, including in: pay and benefits, terms and conditions, recruitment, promotion, training, redundancy, dismissal, leave arrangements, flexible working requests, and access to development opportunities.

Policy

Crossways Church Fellowship commits to:

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion as good practice and as essential to the effectiveness of the organisation.
- Create a working environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Promote dignity and respect for all, recognising and valuing individual differences and contributions.

Training and Responsibilities

- Ensure all staff, leaders and volunteers understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

- Ensure all individuals conduct themselves in a way that supports equal opportunities and prevents bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.
- Make clear that staff, leaders and volunteers, as well as the organisation, can be held liable for acts of discrimination or harassment carried out in the course of their role.

Handling Complaints

- Take seriously all complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation or unlawful discrimination by staff, leaders, volunteers, visitors, suppliers, members of the public, or others encountered during CCF activities.
- Address such acts under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures.
- Recognise that serious incidents may constitute **gross misconduct** and could lead to dismissal without notice.
- Acknowledge that **sexual harassment** may constitute both an employment matter and a criminal offence.
- Note that harassment under the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997** is a criminal offence, even when unrelated to a protected characteristic.

Training, Development and Progression

- Ensure training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff, leaders and volunteers.
- Support individuals to develop their full potential, enabling the organisation to benefit from their talents and abilities.
- Base decisions relating to staff solely on merit, except where lawful exemptions apply (e.g., Genuine Occupational Requirements).

Review and Monitoring

- Review employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and compliance with current legislation.
- Monitor workforce/volunteer composition (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation) to support equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Review this policy and any related action plans annually, taking action to address any issues identified.

This policy is fully supported by the Leadership of Crossways Church Fellowship.

Details of grievance and disciplinary procedures are available from the Trustees. Employees should normally raise grievances with their employer or Trustees.

Using internal procedures does not affect an employee's right to bring a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Recruitment Procedures

CCF seeks to recruit individuals with the right mix of skills, talent and potential, promoting equality for all. Applications are welcomed from a wide range of candidates. Selection for interview is based on skills, qualifications, experience, and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.

Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR)

As an organisation delivering services within a Christian context, some posts require the post-holder to be a practising Christian. These roles currently include:

- Pastor / Lead Elder
- Leadership Team
- Ministry Leaders
- Youth / Kids Worker
- Local or Community Group Leaders

These requirements are lawful under the Equality Act 2010 where the nature of the role or its context gives rise to a **Genuine Occupational Requirement**. Post-holders must demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented in accordance with government and ACAS guidance.

DBS and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess suitability for positions of trust, CCF commits to:

- Comply fully with the **DBS Code of Practice**.
- Treat all applicants fairly and not discriminate on the basis of convictions or other information revealed.
- Request a DBS Disclosure only where relevant to the role.
- Clearly state in application materials when a Disclosure is required.
- Invite applicants to provide details of criminal records confidentially at an early stage where appropriate.
- Ensure only those involved in the recruitment process see this information.
- Ask only about **unspent convictions**, unless the role is exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Ensure recruitment staff are trained to assess the relevance of offences and understand the legal framework.
- Hold open and measured discussions with applicants about any relevant matters.
- Make applicants aware of the DBS Code of Practice and provide copies on request.
- Discuss any concerns arising from a Disclosure before withdrawing a conditional offer.

A criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from working with CCF. Decisions will depend on the nature of the role and the circumstances of the offence(s).