

Lightwave Community CIO (“Lightwave”)

Equal Opportunities, Discrimination, Bullying and Harrassment Policy

1. Introduction

Lightwave is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all fields of its activity in accordance with this Policy Statement. This document should be read in conjunction with the Lightwave Recruitment Policy (including the recruitment of ex-offenders)

2. Definitions

‘Protected Characteristic’ refers to sex, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, age, gender reassignment or religion or belief.

‘Direct Discrimination’ is where a person is treated less favourably than others are, or would be, for a reason related to one or more of the ‘Protected Characteristics’.

‘Indirect Discrimination’ occurs where an individual is subject to a provision, criterion or practice which one protected group finds more difficult to comply with than another (even though on the face of it the provision is neutral).

3. Policy Statement

Lightwave is an equal opportunities employer and will seek to ensure that:

- every job applicant and employee and volunteer has the right not be treated less favourably as a result of one or more Protected Characteristics except in relation to religious belief where being a Christian or complying with a requirement related to religious belief is an occupational requirement having regard to the ethos of Lightwave and the nature of the employment or the context in which it is carried out;
- persons already employed or volunteering will be made aware of the provisions of this policy;
- the application of any recruitment, training and promotion policies will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria and based solely on job requirements and the individual's ability and fitness for that work;
- all persons responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees will be given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination;
- appropriate training will be provided to enable employees (and where appropriate, volunteers) to perform their jobs effectively and uphold the commitment to equality of opportunity;
- encouragement is given to all employees (and where appropriate, volunteers) to take advantage of opportunities for training;
- any age limits imposed for entry to training will be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim and will not unnecessarily exclude certain groups of employees (or where appropriate, volunteers);
- recruitment, literature and advertisements will not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants as against another unless there is an occupational requirement which will be clearly stated and the application of that requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim;
- the most effective ways will be employed to bring job vacancies to the attention of potentially disadvantaged groups;

- applicants for posts will be given clear, accurate and sufficient information through advertisement, job descriptions and interviews, to enable them to assess their own suitability for a post;
- The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with us. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff participate fully in the workplace
- employment policies and procedures are kept under review, in appropriate cases by formal monitoring routines, to ensure that they do not operate against this Policy Statement;
- where it appears that the church's Policy Statement is not being observed the circumstances will be investigated to see if there are any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage employees and, if so, whether these policies and criteria are justifiable;
- appropriate action is taken where necessary to redress the effects of any action, policy or criteria which are found to have unjustifiably limited the observance of this Policy Statement;
- particular care is taken to deal with any complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic;
- a criminal record is not in itself a bar to being appointed to any post. Only relevant offences will be taken into account when appointing to a post where a Disclosure and Barring Service check is required. See the Lightwave Recruitment Policy for more details.
- the requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with us. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff participate fully in the workplace.

4. Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and Harassment can take many forms including physical, verbal and non-verbal.

Examples of behaviour which may constitute harassment or bullying, include but are not limited to:

- spreading malicious rumours
- professional or social exclusion
- insulting behaviour
- unwelcome sexual advances or physical contact
- unfounded threats relating to job security
- calculated undermining of an employee's or volunteer's competence, for example
- through a consistently unreasonable or unfair workload, overbearing supervision or unnecessary circulation of critical memoranda
- physical assault, verbal abuse, threats, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, insults and offensive or embarrassing jokes
- offensive and/or defamatory emails, texts or visual images
- derogatory graffiti/insignia or display of derogatory or offensive material
- inciting others to commit any of the above.

4.1 Bullying

Bullying can be defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress.

Bullying can range from benign directive comments to a severe intimidatory management style. Bullying can take many forms including physical, verbal and non-verbal.

4.2 Harassment

Harassment may be defined as behaviour which is unsolicited, personally offensive and that fails to respect the rights of others in the workplace. Harassment may be directed at one person or many people. It often takes place when there are no witnesses, but not always. It can be persistent behaviour over a period of time but could also be a one-off act. It is not the intention of the perpetrator that is key in the deciding if harassment has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by reasonable normal standards and is disadvantageous or unwelcome to the person or people subjected to it or witnessing it.

It is not possible to define 'unacceptable behaviour' as it is the effect the behaviour has on the recipient that makes it 'unacceptable'.

Harassment can fall under many areas including but not limited to racial, sexual, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status and religious beliefs.

4.3 Procedures for dealing with Bullying and Harassment

Informal Procedure

If the member of staff or volunteer feels able, they should speak up at the time when they feel harassed or bullied. It is important to be direct and to state explicitly why they feel they are being harassed and that the behaviour is unacceptable to them and request that it stops immediately. The member of staff or volunteer is also encouraged to discuss the matter with their line manager and ask them to speak to the harasser on their behalf.

It is also advisable that the member of staff or volunteer keep an 'incident diary' of any offending behaviour and make notes about any relevant incidents which distress them and ensure that a copy is kept for any possible future formal complaint.

If the member of staff or volunteer feels unable to approach the person concerned, it does not constitute consent to the bullying or harassment.

Where the informal procedure has not resolved the complaint, a formal grievance can be raised.

Formal Procedure

If a formal complaint is made by a member of staff or volunteer, this will be dealt with under the Lightwave Grievance procedure.

If the complaint is received from an external source this should be dealt with in accordance with the Lightwave Complaints Procedure.

4.4 Breaches of this policy

Lightwave takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with the Lightwave Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If an employee or volunteer believes that they have suffered discrimination, they can raise the matter through the Grievance Procedure. Matters raised will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

Employees and volunteers must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

4.5 Further information

For further information and guidance see the document [Preventing Bullying and Harassment – Encouraging Positive Relationships Policy & Procedures](#) (Policy adopted at Synod 4 Nov 2017, procedures adopted at Synod 24 Feb 2018)

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