

# Equal Opportunities Policy

## St James Church, Silsden

### Our Vision is to be a Jesus-Shaped Church

#### 1. Principles

- 1.1. The Parochial Church Council of St James Parish Church Silsden (the “**PCC**”) is a Christian organisation committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society.
- 1.2. We are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis.
- 1.3. Discrimination in contravention of the Equalities Act 2010 is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Employees, volunteers and church members have a duty to cooperate with the PCC to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination.

#### 2. Recruitment

As an employer, the PCC will ensure that no job applicant or staff member (whether paid or voluntary) receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The PCC aims to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to enter employment. In doing so, it will fully consider reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a person with a disability is not put at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. In addition, when staff members acquire a disability in the course of their employment, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain in the employment of the PCC.

As a church seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, there are some posts which can only be filled by people who are Christian or have an empathy with the faith and mission of the Church of England:-:

- Children, youth and families worker
- Verger
- Musical Director
- Parish Administrator

The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the

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ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (“**GOR**”) for the post-holders to be a Christian or have these characteristics.

The PCC will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect the requirements for the job and make clear if there is a GOR for the employee to be a Christian.

The PCC notes that under Church of England ecclesiastical law the post of Churchwarden must be filled by a person who is an actual communicant member of the Church of England whilst, of course, Clergy are ordained.

As an organization using the DBS to assess applicants’ suitability for positions of trust, the PCC undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from being successful; this will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

#### 4. Services, Events & Activities

In offering services, activities and facilities to the community the Church will:-

- Make every effort to make reasonable adjustments so that they are accessible and provided fairly to all people who seek to participate and are in accordance with Church of England guidelines.
- Make sure that all service users are treated with dignity and respect and will not have their status undermined.
- Make sure that any degrading behaviour, bullying or harassment is challenged and treated seriously.
- If a matter cannot be resolved informally, the PCC will operate a Complaints Procedure to deal with the matter.
- Make sure that the Complaints Procedure is easy to use and that we respond to complaints efficiently and promptly.

#### 5. Implementation

It is the responsibility of the PCC to monitor effectiveness and to regularly review and develop this Policy.

Each employee and volunteer is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Where

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necessary appropriate training and guidance will be facilitated to support compliance with the Policy.

Any employee may use the Complaints Procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. No individual will be penalised for raising such a grievance unless it is proved to be untrue and made in bad faith.

Any complaints will be fully investigated.

Any discrimination or harassment proven to have taken place will be regarded as misconduct for the purposes of disciplinary procedures.

St James Church Silsden PCC (Parochial Church Council)

Reviewed April 2025