

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	For decision
Draft Resolution	30/1. The Council receives the report. 30/2. The Council approves the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which will replace the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy replaces the existing Equal Opportunities Policy and seeks to incorporate the statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010. The aims are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully reflected in the Methodist Council's employment practices and procedures. • To ensure that the Methodist Council is compliant with the statutory employment duties under the Equality Act 2010. • To ensure employment policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed so that they do not operate against The Methodist Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. • To ensure the Methodist Council attracts and retains a diverse workforce through appropriate recruitment and selection methods (except in a matter of an occupational requirement or in any case where the criminal record history relates to the requirements of the post).
Main Points	The statutory amendments are a legal requirement. Equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the mission of the Methodist Church.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	The existing Equal Opportunities Policy is out of date and in need of amendment to be in line with the Equality Act 2010.
Consultations	The Connexional Team Senior Leadership Group The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser

Summary of Impact

Financial	The proposals can be funded from existing resources.
Personnel	The proposals accord with existing processes and practices.
Legal including impact on other jurisdictions	Employing bodies are required to have in place arrangements which accord with the legislative requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.
Wider Connexion	The proposals apply to all lay employees of the Methodist Council. The Policy is included in Methodist Council employees' contracts and is recommended as good practice to be included in all connexional lay employees' contracts. The Policy is available in the Lay Employment Advisory Information pack on the website.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Methodist Council is fully committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, valuing and embracing diversity and ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach in all fields of its activity. The Methodist Council seeks to adhere to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following specific protected characteristics: gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership and pregnancy & maternity.
- 1.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the mission of the Methodist Church. This is embodied in the Connexional Team's *Shared Values* statement 'Highly professional Distinctively Christian'. As an employer, the Methodist Council is committed to 'respecting others and striving for excellence whilst watching over one another in love and working together with a generous spirit'. It seeks to build a culture that values professionalism, openness, fairness and transparency and holds equality of opportunity at the heart of what it does.

Scope

- 1.3 In accordance with the Council's commitment to issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion all members of the Connexional Team, as well as consultants, suppliers, contractors and agency workers, have a duty to act in accordance with this Policy, creating an environment free from discrimination.

Aim

- 1.4 The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of equality, diversity and inclusion in The Methodist Council's values:
- To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully reflected in the Methodist Council's employment practices and procedures.
 - To ensure that the Methodist Council is compliant with the statutory employment duties under the Equality Act 2010.
 - To ensure employment policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed so that they do not operate against The Methodist Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
 - To ensure the Methodist Council attracts and retains a diverse workforce through appropriate recruitment and selection methods except in a matter of:
 - i. Occupational Requirement - in the light of the Methodist Council's Christian purpose and ethos it reserves the right to exercise legal exemptions under the Equality Act 2010 where it is declared that a Christian faith is integral to the work and requires membership of the Methodist Church or another recognised church;
 - ii. Offending background - in any case where the criminal record history relates to the requirements of the post.

2. Definitions

2.1 Discrimination:

- (a) **'Direct Discrimination'** is where a person is treated less favourably than another not on the merits of the case but on grounds of a protected characteristic.
- (b) **'Discrimination by association'** occurs where a person is directly discriminated against by association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- (c) **'Discrimination by perception'** is where a person is directly discriminated against based on a perception that the person has a particular protected characteristic even if the person does not actually possess that protected characteristic.

- (d) **'Indirect Discrimination'** occurs when a provision, practice or a criterion that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Although equally applicable to all possible applicants, this may nevertheless be discriminatory because:
- (i) The number of persons of the same personal status who can comply with the requirement is considerably smaller than the number who cannot; and
 - (ii) The requirement cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- 2.2 **'Harassment'** is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity. There are three types:
- (a) Harassment related to a protected characteristic
 - (b) Sexual harassment
 - (c) Less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment
- 2.3 **'Victimisation'** occurs when an individual is treated badly or has suffered a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 All members of the Connexional Team are responsible for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and conducting themselves in accordance with this policy. Particular responsibility lies with the Methodist Council, the Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team, Line Managers, Development and Personnel, and the Staff Association representatives.
- 3.2 **The Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team will:**
- Ensure that the commitment of the Methodist Council is communicated to all members of the Connexional Team fairly and responsibly including potential Team members, users of its services, and all those working for, or on behalf of, or providing a service to the Methodist Council such as consultants, volunteers, interns, Agency Workers and those on work experience placements.
 - Lead by example, encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion internally and externally.
 - Be responsible for creating a climate where the differences that individuals bring are valued.
 - Embed equality, diversity and inclusion in decision making processes.
- 3.3 **Line Managers will:**
- Foster good relations between all members of the Connexional Team, service users/providers.
 - Ensure that their direct reports attend equality, diversity and inclusion workshops periodically, in addition to the initial induction.
 - Be responsible for the selection, management and promotion of members of the Connexional Team and will be given information and / or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.
- 3.4 **All Members of the Connexional Team will:**
- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is taken into account in undertaking their work to serve the Church.
 - Be aware of their responsibilities and report inappropriate behaviour/s and raise any incident/s that breach this policy and procedure with their line manager and Development and Personnel.
 - Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedure, ensuring that their practices are consistent with its contents.
 - Undertake equality, diversity and inclusion training.

3.5 **Development and Personnel will:**

- Ensure that all Development and Personnel policies and procedures are in line with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and are updated following legislative changes in consultation with the Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team and the Staff Association representatives.
- Design, present and evaluate mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion workshops for all new members of the Connexional Team as part of the induction process in addition to providing ongoing training to line managers.
- Advise on, and deal effectively with, staff complaints and grievances relating to any form of discrimination and sexual harassment.
- Advise the Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team and line managers on best practice on staffing issues taking into account the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in all advice that is given.
- Advise line managers on handling all disability related Connexional Team issues especially when taking into account Interhealth's Occupational Health advice on reasonable adjustments.
- Collect confidential equality, diversity and inclusion information on the protected characteristics from job applicants. This data will be collated for EDI reports providing statistics of the age, ethnicity, gender and religion/belief profile of employees in the Connexional Team, each cluster/office and management levels.

4. **Recruitment and selection**

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within the recruitment and selection procedures.

5. **Breaches of this Policy**

5.1 If a member of the Connexional Team believes that he/she has been subject to discrimination under this Policy, then he/she is encouraged to raise the matter with his/her line manager or Development and Personnel.

5.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this Policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated in accordance with the Methodist Council Grievance Policy. Members of the Connexional Team who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the Methodist Council Disciplinary Policy.

5.3 Any Methodist Council employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Methodist Council takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

6. **For ministers serving within the Connexional Team**

The Complaints and Discipline process as set out in Part 11 of Standing Orders applies to all ministers. For those appointed to serve in the Connexional Team the Secretary of the Conference acts as the Local Complaints Officer. Further advice on specific matters should be sought from the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

30/1. The Council receives the report.

30/2. The Council approves the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which will replace the Equal Opportunities Policy.