

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

CONTEXT

Jesus said "Love one another".

We recall St Paul's injunction: *Keep on loving each other as friends. Do not forget to entertain strangers for by so doing some people have entertained angels.* We believe that everyone is made in the image of God and is therefore worthy of respect.

The DBF celebrates and welcomes rather than tolerates diversity in our organisation, in the church and in society as a whole. It is therefore committed to proactive equal opportunities and welcomes all people, with a positive view of age, caring responsibilities, gender, disability, racial/ethnic origin, religious beliefs, marital status, HIV status or other health-related reason, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, as employees, Committee members and volunteers.

Notwithstanding this commitment the DBF reserves the right to emphasise its charitable status as a Church of England foundation. Thus where there is a genuine occupational reason for a specific post it may require the postholder to be:

- A communicant member of the Church of England,
- A priest, deacon or other member of the Church of England holding the Bishop's Licence
- A practising Christian of a recognised denomination.

All staff must understand and express sympathy with the Christian ethos of the Board and do nothing that would be seen to undermine it.

- The DBF will not tolerate any breaches of this Policy and will endeavour to ensure that all its activities and other policies are in accordance with this policy.
- The DBF recognises and accepts its obligations under relevant legislation.
- The DBF accepts that there is a need to understand what discrimination is, admit it exists and be able to recognise it in all its forms. It accepts that it is possible for individuals, policies and structures to be unintentionally discriminatory or offensive and accepts that such attitudes and structures must be challenged.
- The DBF will proactively promote an environment that treats all people with dignity and respect and provides equality of opportunity to people of any age, caring responsibilities, gender, disability, racial/ethnic origin, religious beliefs, marital status, HIV status or other health-related reason, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. The DBF expects its employees and volunteers to be sensitive to its Anglican basis and the theological differences of the Anglican church.

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- The DBF aims to nurture an environment of equality of opportunity in employment. Interviews for employment and voluntary work will take place in accordance with Equal Opportunities. Internal and external job applications and appointments and staff retention will be monitored.
- In order to make physical environments and services accessible to all, the DBF will strive to make relevant adaptations and provide appropriate resources.
- The DBF aims to ensure that all its staff and volunteers understand and are committed to the promotion of Equal Opportunities from the time of appointment. The DBF will ensure employees understand their responsibilities under legislation and government guidelines, by providing on-going training and development opportunities.
- The DBF will undertake Equal Opportunities monitoring. This will assist in measuring the effectiveness of the Policy as well as identify training needs, gaps in service and review of practices.
- The DBF recognises the need to have support mechanisms for those who have been or may be subjected to discrimination or harassment and will endeavour to provide such services.
- The DBF will avoid entering into contracts, partnerships or agreements with individuals, groups or organisations when it is aware that any of their policies or practices contravenes the Equal Opportunities policy of the DBF.
- The DBF accepts the need for an annual review of its Equal Opportunities policy and practices.

DEFINITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Under the Equal Opportunities Policy of the DBF discrimination is defined as: any breach of this policy, discrimination legislation and/or criminal law, including:

- Violence or threat of violence
- Verbal abuse
- Bullying
- Inappropriate language
- Inappropriate behaviour/physical contact
- Exclusion
- Stereotyping
- Collusion with discriminatory behaviour or practices

It is also classed as unacceptable (except in special cases outlined elsewhere within this policy) to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, caring responsibilities, gender, disability, racial/ethnic origin, religious beliefs, marital status, HIV status or other health-related reason, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DBF

The DBF accepts responsibility under legislation for the actions of employees and responsibility for any practices, policies or procedures that may be found to be unintentionally discriminatory and will strive to ensure that this is eradicated. It welcomes the input of staff, volunteers, committee members and parishes to bring this to the attention of the DBF.

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The DBF will strive to achieve equal opportunities in aspects of recruitment, subject to the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations. However, there may be instances where vacancies are not advertised externally, where, for example a member of staff is redeployed.

COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES

The DBF will ensure that:

- An employee, who reports another employee for behaving in a discriminatory manner will be fully supported, believed and encouraged to use the grievance procedure. Employees will be offered counselling, supervision and support (see Whistle Blowing Policy & Procedures and Anti-harassment Policy).
- Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy, intentional or unintentional, are dealt with promptly and properly, fully investigated and accurately recorded and appropriate disciplinary or remedial action taken.
- When an employee has been disciplined for misconduct in respect of the Policy, a satisfactory change of conduct and attitude is sought and monitored by the line manager through formal supervision.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Training will not be used as a substitute for disciplinary action in incidents that contravene the Equal Opportunities Policy.

When booking a suitable venue, consideration to special needs should be given, e.g. accessibility.

EMPLOYEES & THE CHRISTIAN BASIS OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

All employees should be aware of the Anglican foundation of the DBF and its basic principles (please see the Christian basis section of the staff handbook). Where there is conflict between these and personal beliefs and values it must be understood that employment with the DBF may preclude the expression of personal views and values no matter how deeply held in context of employment and professional duties.

Employees of the diocese whose duties require them to represent or speak on behalf of the Church may not be a member of, or promote or solicit support for a party or organisation whose constitution, policy objectives or public statements are declared in writing by the House of Bishops to be incompatible with the Church of England's commitment to race equality. This explicitly includes the BNP.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

All employees, in particular relevant line managers must ensure that an anti-discriminatory working environment is created and sustained in the DBF through:

- Provision of a management structure and working environment in which direct or indirect discrimination is unacceptable.
- Regular monitoring of all working practices to ensure that they do not collude with discriminatory practice, including logging and monitoring incidents and complaints of discrimination.
- Equal opportunities monitoring of staff, committee membership and volunteers to address and identify needs for recruitment, training/development and/or service provision.
- Proactive promotion of anti-discriminatory behaviour and practice as part of daily activities.
- Reporting any incidents of discrimination to a line manager, or another member of the Management Group (where that is more appropriate). In line with recommendations made in the Macpherson Report, an incident of discrimination can be reported by anybody who witnesses the incident, not just by the person being discriminated against.