

ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH and COMMUNITY CENTRE

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Statement

St Augustine's Church, as part of the Church of England, is committed to promoting diversity and equal opportunities in the communities it serves. We will work to combat all direct and indirect forms of discrimination, and take positive steps to remove barriers to participation and achieve equality of opportunity. We want St Augustine's to be open and accessible to all members of the local and wider communities, and able to play an active role in the services we offer.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in similar circumstances on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation or perceived sexuality, marital status, disability, health or medical problems, membership or non membership of a trade union, spent convictions of ex-offenders, age, politics, religion or belief, responsibility for dependents, social or economic disadvantage. (This is not intended as an exhaustive list.)

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which adversely affects one particular group considerably more than another, and cannot be strictly justified in terms of requirements for performing the job.

The Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to

- i) all St Augustine's activities, projects and contracts
- ii) all St Augustine's staff and volunteers
- iii) St Augustine's District Church Council and its members.

Policy and Objectives

Our aim is to provide a respectful and dignified environment in which all may enjoy true equality of opportunity. We will promote knowledge and understanding of equalities issues throughout the church community and amongst those using the Hall. And we will seek to provide support to those with whom we are in contact and who feel that they have been subject to discrimination or harassment, engaging the assistance of outside agencies where appropriate.

We will not knowingly enter into contracts, partnerships or agreements with individuals or groups where there is evidence of discriminatory practice on their part.

Practical Measures

We will

- prioritise activities that support groups who are most disadvantaged or traditionally experience discrimination and have poor access to resources
- ensure that our premises are accessible to all
- adopt a scale of hire charges which seek to reflect our understanding of a group's ease of access to resources and their contribution to the welfare of the local community
- use language that is straightforward and accessible in providing information and publicity.

Implementation

The District Church Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that this policy is understood by its staff, volunteers and members, and will draw this to the attention of all those using the Hall as part of the Terms and Conditions of Hire.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. The next review date is 1 May 2017.