



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. ABOUT THIS POLICY

- 1.1. Rooted Community Church is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. All employees, workers, volunteers, contractors and job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).
- 1.2. In some circumstances, as permitted by the Equality Act 2010 ("The Act"), roles will require applicants to have a Christian faith and/or sympathy to the purposes of the Church. This will be clear in any recruitment documentation and will only be applied where necessary and in compliance with the Act and accompanying guidance.
- 1.3. This policy sets out Rooted Community Church's approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with the Church, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
- 1.4. Trustees of Rooted Community Church are responsible for this policy and any necessary training on equal opportunities.
- 1.5. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and Rooted Community Church may amend it at any time.

2. Discrimination

- 2.1. This policy prohibits the unlawful discrimination or harassment of other people including current and former employees, job applicants, users of the Church's buildings, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.
- 2.2. The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:
 - 2.2.1. *Direct discrimination*: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic.
For example, refusing to recruit an individual based on their race.
 - 2.2.2. *Indirect discrimination*: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified.
For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men.

Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified. *Harassment*: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.

2.2.3. *Victimisation*: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

2.2.4. *Disability discrimination*: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

3. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 3.1. Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.
- 3.2. Where an occupational requirement is needed, and valid under the Equality Act 2010, this will be drafted and applied within the provisions of the Act.
- 3.3. Rooted Community Church is a Christian organisation which seeks to operate in and for the name of Christ. For some roles within the church, sharing and living out the Christian faith will be recognised as an Occupational Requirement, this requirement will be outlined in the relevant Job Descriptions and Specifications.
- 3.4. Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.
- 3.5. Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
- 3.6. Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

4. Disabilities

- 4.1. Rooted Community Church encourages anyone covered by this policy if they are disabled or become disabled, to tell their line manager or another appropriate person within Rooted Community Church about their condition so that Rooted Community Church can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

5. Fixed Term and Part Tim Employees

5.1. Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

6. Ex-Offenders

6.1. Rooted Community Church aims to ensure that people with a criminal background are given equal opportunity to enter employment or volunteering. Rooted Community Church will only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that they are legally entitled to know about and for roles in which such checks are deemed necessary. Rooted Community Church will only ask about convictions and cautions that are not protected. Rooted Community Church actively promotes equal opportunity for all with the right mix of talent and skill and welcomes applications from a range of people, including those with criminal records. Rooted Community Church undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS with the individual seeking a role before withdrawing the offer of a role.

7. Breaches of this Policy

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

7.2. If anyone believes that they have suffered discrimination they can raise the matter through the Church's Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

7.3. No one will be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.