

	
<b>EQUALITIES &amp; EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY</b>	
<b>Approved Date</b>	<b>23/11/2021</b> <b>05.12.23</b>
<b>Review Dates</b>	<b>Policy – Trustees - November /2023</b> <b>Policy – Trustees – December 2026</b>

## **EQUALITY POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

1. Christian Community Action Ministries (CCA recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees/volunteers to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of CCA to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or during their employment. CCA is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, and creating an inclusive environment in all of its work.
  
2. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.
  
3. All employees and volunteers, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
  
4. CCA is a Christian organisation. Whilst we do not require individuals to observe our faith, we ask that anyone working with us is supportive of our ethos in relation to their work they carry out for us.
  
5. Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or service users because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation or class in the provision of the organisation’s goods and services.

## **OUR COMMITMENT**

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. We encourage behaviour that reflects the Christian values of CCA
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures biennially to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees in agreement with the Senior Management Team.
- The policy will be reviewed biennially.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT**

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the C.E.O. (or equivalent) or their approved deputy. Staff will ensure that they, and voluntary workers, operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The CEO (or equivalent) or their approved deputy will ensure that:

- all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible
- any complaint, and the process followed in addressing it, must be fully documented.

The CEO and Board of Trustees will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so

- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics
- ensure that no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic
- Inform the Board of Trustees if they become aware of any discriminatory practice or behaviour that would bring the organisation into disrepute.

### **THIRD PARTIES**

Third-party harassment occurs where a CCA employee or volunteer is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties, or service users. CCA will not tolerate such actions against its staff or volunteers, and the employee concerned should inform their Line Manager at once that this has occurred. CCA will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

### **RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS**

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The organisation's policies will be reviewed biennially and any discriminatory elements removed.

### **RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE**

CCA attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, the CEO is required to:

- make reasonable adjustment(s) to maintain the services of an employee or volunteer who becomes disabled; for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: if necessary, the CEO (or appointed deputy) will seek advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

### **EQUALITY TRAINING**

Equality information is included in our induction programme.

Training will be provided for staff on this policy and the associated arrangements including recruitment and selection processes.

### **MONITORING**

CCA deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole.

## **GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE**

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimization via the CCA Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the CCA Disciplinary Procedure.

## **Terms and conditions of employment**

- We will ensure that all our employment policies including compensation, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated and applied in such a way as to remove/minimise any discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic or indeed any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.
- These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination. Length of service as a qualifying criterion for additional or improved benefits will not exceed five years unless clearly justifiable.
- Employees will not be subjected to any detriment if they wish to join our pension scheme, nor will they be offered any inducement not to do so. This would include refusing promotion or training to someone who decided not to opt-out, or refusing or reducing a pay increase if it would bring the worker within the band of earnings that would make them eligible for auto-enrolment etc. **Recruitment and promotion**

### **promotion**

- Our recruitment and promotion processes must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job, whether this on a full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, seasonal or contract basis. Our focus is on the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and potential of individuals to do their jobs.
- We will ensure that our job adverts encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people, through either internal and/or external advertising.
- All adverts will be carefully worded to ensure that no intent of either direct or indirect discrimination is interpreted nor is there indication of stereotyping of roles. They will normally state "We are an equal opportunity employer and value diversity". When advertising a position which has traditionally been done by one sex, adverts should specify they are open to both sexes.
- Job descriptions will properly reflect the responsibilities of the jobholder and person specifications will include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.
- Selection criteria and procedures are intended to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their individual relevant merit, ability and suitability for the post. Membership of an under-represented group will not influence the appointment. Shortlisting and interviewing will normally be carried out by more than one person, to minimise the risk of conscious or unconscious bias.
- The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels and will be fair and non-discriminatory. Interviews will be undertaken with an unbiased approach towards candidates and only questions which relate to the job and which are non-discriminatory will be asked. Questions about: marriage plans; family intentions; religious or political commitments; caring responsibilities; intention to join our pension scheme or to opt out; or about any other issues which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination should not be asked. Selection tests will be specifically related to the job and measure an individual's actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job.

- All information provided by applicants will be treated as confidential and their details will be stored and processed in line with the requirements of data protection legislation. **Complaints**
- Harassment, discrimination, and bullying will not be tolerated. We recognise that making a complaint can be embarrassing and stressful. Sometimes the complainant simply wants the conduct or behaviour to stop and sometimes they want stronger action to be taken and therefore to take account of this we offer various routes of action.
- When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken that employees or workers who have, are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic, are not dismissed or disciplined for performance or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in other employees or workers.
- Employees who believe they have either been discriminated against or have witnessed discrimination, should bring this to our attention as soon as possible, either informally or formally in accordance with our grievance procedure. An employee who, in good faith, brings a complaint of discrimination must not be victimised or less favourably treated as a result. (However, false allegations that are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.)

### **Grievance Purpose**

- The objective of our grievance policy is to provide all employees and workers with the opportunity to raise a grievance concerning work-related matters and to enable our managers to deal with these in a manner that is fair and consistent, whilst aiming to maintain harmonious employee relations in the long term.
- We recognise that, from time to time, individuals may have a concern relating to their employment. We encourage open discussion between them and their managers to ensure that any questions and problems are aired and resolved as quickly as possible.
- Generally, most concerns will be resolved as they arise by employers and workers talking to their managers. However, where there is a more serious concern, or one that is not readily resolved, the procedure to follow is outlined below. We encourage the use of the formal procedure if the individual is unable to resolve the problem through their day to day working relationship with their manager. The procedure should be followed as quickly as possible to ensure issues are resolved in a timely manner.
- In raising a grievance, the concern or issue should be current or *if it has occurred in the past it must not have been previously investigated* or is a repeat of an earlier incident. (The focus of the grievance procedure is to achieve resolution, not to apportion blame.)

We will treat all matters as confidential between our employees and any individuals directly involved in the process. Any witness statements and decisions will be kept confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation. **Mediation**

- Mediation may be considered as an appropriate alternative method of resolving any differences between employers and workers. Where mediation is introduced before or during the grievance process, all parties will be asked to confirm in writing that they agree to the grievance process being adjourned whilst mediation is being undertaken. Should mediation prove unsuccessful, the grievance process will be resumed; where it is successful, the grievance will be regarded as resolved. **Former employees**
- Former employees may also raise grievances at any time up to three months after their employment has ended. In such cases, we would normally ask that they set out the details of their grievance in writing, ensuring that this is dated and states that they are making a formal grievance. We will then undertake a due process to investigate and respond in writing to the grievance which may negate the need for a grievance meeting

- However, if the complaint relates to dissatisfaction with a dismissal decision, an appeal should be made against that decision in accordance with the appeal process set out in the dismissal letter or, for example, in line with our disciplinary policy, rather than invoking the grievance procedure.

### **REVIEW**

The Policy will be reviewed by the Trustees biennially and the Procedures by the Senior Staff Team annually.