

# Equal Opportunities Policy 2020

## Policy Statement

Counterslip Baptist Church recognises the value of equal opportunities and is committed, wherever possible, to following the guidelines drawn up by the relevant statutory body. As a church we seek to promote the equality of opportunity in all fields of our activity in accordance with this Policy Statement and our belief in the Christian Scriptures.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”  
- Galatians 3:28

## Definitions

**Protected Characteristic:** refers to sex, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, age, gender reassignment or religion or belief.

**Direct Discrimination:** is where a person is treated less favourably than others are, or would be, for a reason related to one or more of the ‘Protected Characteristics’.

**Indirect Discrimination:** occurs where an individual is subject to a provision, criterion or practice which one protected group finds more difficult to comply with than another (even though on the face of it the provision is neutral).

## Exceptions

There are two exceptions within the Equality Act 2010 that allow employers to justify different treatment, and therefore discriminate, which are not unlawful:

- **The first exception is what is known as a ‘General Occupational Requirement’.** This exception can be used if the context and nature of the job need the post-holder to be of a certain orientation e.g. for counselling on sexuality. This exception is narrow. It only applies where there is a very clear connection between the work to be done and the characteristics required.

- **The second exception, known as the ‘Organised Religion Occupational Requirement’** is more specific and covers a requirement to be of a particular sex, not to be a transsexual person, not to be married or a civil partner, not to be married to, or the civil partner of, a person who has a living former spouse or civil partner, relating to circumstances in which a marriage or civil partnership came to an end, or related to sexual orientation. This exception allows the employer to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation where living in accordance with a particular lifestyle or behaviour is an occupational requirement (OR) for the job.

## Policy

In relation to matters of religion and belief, Counterslip Baptist Church reserves the right to appoint staff who are loyal to the Christian ethos of the organisation in order to preserve its distinctiveness in accordance with the Employment Equality Regulations 2003.

Counterslip Baptist Church is a Christian organisation which seeks to operate in and for the name of Christ and those who work in the organisation must be in sympathy with the evangelical Christian beliefs as set out in the Basis of Faith and their promotion.

In employment we actively seek to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation. However, for some posts within Counterslip Baptist Church, more than a loyalty to the Christian ethos of the organisation is required and these posts are recognised as having Genuine Occupational Requirements. For details on these posts speak with the church trustees.

As an organisation using the DBS to assess applicants’ suitability for positions of trust, the organisation undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

A Disclosure is only requested if relevant for the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position

Counterslip Baptist Church recognises that the UK has a rich diversity of cultures from around the world and seeks to bring Christian witness equally to all cultures. Accordingly, Counterslip Baptist Church is committed to equal opportunity, and it is its policy to treat job applicants, employees (including volunteer staff) and suppliers in the same way, subject to requiring employees to adhere to Counterslip’s ethos statement and staff code of conduct.

## Implementation

Counterslip Baptist Church is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about ensuring good employment practices and efficient use of Counterslip's most valuable resources, its employees. Every employee, including volunteer team members, has personal responsibility for implementing the policy. Any instance of doubt about the application of this policy, or other questions, should be directed to the trustees.

This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and selection, training, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment. (Staff involved in recruitment should request training if they have any doubt about the application of this policy.)

Any member of staff may use the grievance procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to unlawful harassment then the grievance may be raised directly with the trustees. Counterslip Baptist Church is concerned to ensure that staff feel able to raise such grievances and no individual will be penalised for raising such a grievance unless it is untrue and made in bad faith.

The policy also applies equally to the treatment of members, customers (users of CBC), volunteers, clients or suppliers. Any concern related to the unequal treatment of any of these people should be directed to the trustees.

**DISCIPLINE:** Any employee who unlawfully harasses any other employee (including volunteers) in the course of their employment will be subject to the organisation's disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, will result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.

## Equal Opportunities Statement

This equal opportunities statement and equal opportunities policy reflect both the mission and purpose of Counterslip Baptist Church and the spirit and intentions of legislation which outlaws discrimination.

Counterslip Baptist Church will not unlawfully discriminate or subject any individual (job applicant or staff member) to less favourable treatment.

Counterslip Baptist Church aims to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to enter employment. In so doing, it will fully consider making reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. In addition, when staff members become disabled in the course of their employment, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain in the employment of Counterslip Baptist Church.

After taking into account any genuine occupational requirement, entry into employment and promotion or change of post within the organisation is determined by personal merit and ability, relevant to the mission and purpose of the church.

It is the responsibility of every individual, both staff and volunteer, to eliminate discrimination by ensuring the practical application of the equal opportunities policy and reporting concerns about any possible breach of this policy to the trustees.

All allegations of discrimination (including harassment) will be treated seriously. Any unlawful discrimination is totally unacceptable to Counterslip Baptist Church and perpetrators will face disciplinary action.

## Contact

To report any issues or concerns please contact our designated safeguard trustee Andrea Laity in the church office on either:

Tel: 01275 833 377

Email: [office@counterslip.org](mailto:office@counterslip.org)