

Equal Opportunities Policy

Grace and Favour Ministries is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our Trustees and Volunteers, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our Trustees and Volunteers to be truly representative of all sections of society, our community and service users, and for each individual to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation in providing its services is also committed against unlawful discrimination of service users or customers or the public.

Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all who volunteer, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.

2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination.

Our commitments

Grace and Favour Ministries commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the organisation and in all its activities held as they are good practice and make business sense.

2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all Volunteers are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training Trustees and all other Volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities policy. Responsibilities include Volunteers conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in volunteering, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All Volunteers should understand they, as well as their charity, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their volunteering, against fellow Volunteers, customers, suppliers and the public.

3. Take serious complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow Volunteers, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all Volunteers, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

5. Make decisions concerning Volunteers being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

6. Monitor the make-up of the organisation regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equal opportunities policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equal opportunities policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Agreement to follow this policy

The equal opportunities policy is fully supported and has been agreed by Trustees and Volunteers.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found at www.graceandfavourministries.org.uk. This includes with whom a volunteer should raise a grievance – usually a Trustee.