



## **Equal Opportunities Statement and Policy**

### **Introduction**

Faithworks Wessex is fully committed to equality of opportunity and operates in a non-discriminatory manner in the delivery of services to the community.

### **Principles**

#### Service to the community

- To serve and respect all people regardless of their:
  - Age
  - Colour
  - Current employment status.
  - Disability
  - Physical or mental capability
  - Ethnic or national origins
  - Gender (including transgender)
  - HIV status
  - Marital status
  - Nationality
  - Race
  - Religion
  - Philosophical views
  - Sexual preference
  - Political persuasion
  - Trade Union activity
- To acknowledge the freedom of people of all faiths or none both to hold and to express their beliefs and convictions respectfully and freely within the limits of UK law
- Never to impose our Christian faith or beliefs on others.

#### Clients, staff and volunteers

- To create an environment where clients, volunteers and employees are encouraged and enabled to reach their potential.
- To abide by the requirements of employment law in the UK and to implement best practices and procedures designed to maintain our distinct ethos and values.

#### Management and outcomes

- To maintain a management structure which fosters and encourages participation by staff at all levels in order to achieve our goals.

## Legislation

Faithworks Wessex recognises its responsibilities to adhere to all anti-discriminatory legislation. The application of equal opportunities with regards to recruitment is driven by our Christian ethos statement and protocol consistent with employment law and practice.

Regulation 7(3) of the Employment Equality (Religion or belief) Regulations 2003, allows for the employment of those with a Christian faith where there is a Genuine Occupational Requirement to do so. These regulations allow an employer, when recruiting for a post, to treat job applicants differently on the grounds of religion or belief, if possessing a particular religion or belief is a genuine and determining (i.e. decisive) occupational requirement ("GOR") for that post.

## Management

Faithworks Wessex will operate in such a manner as to encourage participation by members of all sections of the community in its activities at all levels.

## Staffing

- All staff will be recruited on the basis of job requirements and the candidates' ability to fulfil the necessary skill, experience and qualification criteria. However, as a Christian organisation, our work is motivated by and dependent on the faith of our staff. All paid positions will therefore be subject to an assessment as to whether a Genuine Occupational Requirement exists for an understanding of and commitment to the Christian faith, as described on the individual job descriptions.
- We will endeavour, where possible and within the constraints of the requirements of the particular post, to make posts accessible to meet the individual needs of employees/volunteers in relation to their personal circumstances e.g. flexible work patterns, appropriate working environment.
- All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's commitment to equality of opportunity and their need to understand and endorse it, and contribute to the principle by their compliance while on Faithworks Wessex business.

## Service delivery

- Any service offered by Faithworks Wessex will be offered in a non-discriminatory manner.
- Services will be offered in a manner appropriate and acceptable to the individual's particular needs, views and circumstances.
- No member of the public will be refused an available service appropriate to their needs on grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or living arrangements; age; physical or sensory impairment, mental health or learning difficulties, social and/or economic circumstances; political views; religious beliefs.

### Events and meetings

- We will ensure that events and meetings organised and/or supported by Faithworks Wessex are held in fully accessible locations which are reasonably accessible by public transport, and that arrangements are made to enable participation by people irrespective of impairments, disability, diet and religion.

### Communications

- We will ensure that information produced by Faithworks Wessex and the means of communication are accessible to as many people as possible irrespective of location, technology, language, physical and mental ability and financial resources

### Compliance, monitoring and review

- All staff, volunteers and members of the public in contact with the organisation will have access to information on how to complain if they believe this policy has been breached, particularly if they feel they have been personally discriminated against either directly or indirectly (see Complaints policy).
- The Faithworks Wessex board of trustees will delegate responsibility to one of their number (currently, Steve Robinson) to periodically check on the organisation's performance against this policy.
- Failure of staff/volunteers/trustees to operate within this policy is a disciplinary matter.

The board of trustees will review both the adherence to the policy and the policy itself on a regular basis.