



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

(last updated June 2012)

1. STATEMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 1.1 The Archdiocese of Liverpool is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment and declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic, whether through direct or indirect discrimination.
- 1.2 Accordingly, management will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion procedures result in no job applicant or employee receiving less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic i.e. on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, trade union membership or non-membership, sex, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, marital status/civil partnership, or on the basis of being a part-time or fixed-term worker. The company's objective is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

2. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

- 2.1 The Archdiocese of Liverpool states its wholehearted support for the principles and practices of equal opportunity and recognises that it is the duty of all employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining a harmonious working environment.
- 2.2 The Archdiocese of Liverpool will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the Archdiocese of Liverpool through the application of employment policies which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. All managers and supervisors will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles.
- 2.3 The Archdiocese of Liverpool will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected, promoted and trained on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by any practices which because of a protected characteristic constitute direct or indirect discrimination.
- 2.4 The Archdiocese of Liverpool recognises the problems that harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim.

All forms of harassment are abhorrent and will not be tolerated by the Archdiocese. Harassment in any form is regarded as unlawful discrimination and additionally may also be subject to criminal proceedings. All such cases will be dealt with under the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.

The Archdiocese of Liverpool recognises that the detriment a disabled person endures as a consequence of their disability can, in many instances, be removed by the adoption of reasonable adjustments. The Archdiocese of Liverpool is committed to ensure that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENT

- 3.1 The Archdiocese of Liverpool recognises that the regular monitoring of employees and job applicants is essential to the thorough review of the effectiveness of this Policy and to this end the Archdiocese of Liverpool will initiate equal opportunity monitoring.
- 3.2 The successful implementation of this Policy depends upon the regular examination and progress towards equal opportunity.
- 3.3 The Archdiocese of Liverpool will review the workplace and arrangements affecting any disabled employee and will take such steps as is reasonable to prevent substantial disadvantage.

4. GRIEVANCE, DISCIPLINARY AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The Archdiocese of Liverpool will ensure that any individual or group of employees who believe that they have experienced direct or indirect discrimination are properly represented in any grievance proceedings. Any employee who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly in connection with their employment should raise their grievance through the Grievance Procedure when every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution. In addition the Archdiocese of Liverpool will ensure that any employee making a complaint of unfair discrimination (or any employee assisting or representing) will be protected from any victimisation. Where the complaint relates to alleged harassment, the procedure outlined at Section 9, should be followed.
- 4.2 The Archdiocese of Liverpool will continue to treat unfair discriminatory conduct by any member of staff as a serious disciplinary offence.

5. TRAINING AND ADVERTISING

- 5.1 The Archdiocese of Liverpool will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability only. The Archdiocese of Liverpool will seek to encourage employees and job applicants of under represented groups by using the positive action measures available to the Archdiocese of Liverpool through the relevant legislation.
- 5.2 When vacancies are advertised both internally and externally, the Archdiocese of Liverpool will continue to ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this Policy. To this end, opportunities will be taken through language, images or declarations, as appropriate, to show that the Archdiocese of Liverpool is an equal opportunities employer. In practical terms this means that the wording of advertisements will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any hidden discrimination is avoided or that discriminatory loaded wording is avoided. Every effort will be made to ensure that the advertisements are placed in newspapers and publications so that as wide a readership as possible has access to the vacancies.

This may include the placing of advertisements in ethnic publications and women's magazines.

- 5.3 To this end, "word of mouth" advertising, personal contacts and family relationships will be discouraged as the only means of recruiting new staff or promoting existing staff.

6. COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The principles in this Policy will be brought to the attention of all staff by means of publication in the Employee Handbook.
- 6.2 All employees are encouraged to bring to the attention of their line manager any act of discrimination they observe.
- 6.3 Employees who are newly disabled are encouraged to bring this to the attention of their line manager to enable a review of their treatment to be made. This review will include an assessment of the workplace and arrangements to ensure that these do not place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Where they do, then adjustments will be effected where reasonable to do so.

7. HARRASMENT

7.1 Preamble

Harassment in the employment situation is unlawful under discrimination legislation and as a consequence is unlawful behaviour. It is also improper and inappropriate behaviour which lowers morale and interferes with the effectiveness of people at work.

It is the policy of this Archdiocese of Liverpool to make every effort to provide a working environment free from all forms of harassment and intimidation.

All employees are expected to comply with the policy and to ensure that such conduct does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action including summary dismissal for serious offences will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

7.2 Definition

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim.

7.3 Examples

The following are examples of inappropriate behaviour covered by this Policy:-

Physical conduct of a sexual nature: unwanted physical contact including unnecessary touching, patting, pinching or brushing up against another employee's body, assault.

Verbal conduct by nature of a sexual, racial, age, sexually oriented, or on the grounds of religion or belief: unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, offensive comments on religious grounds, suggestive remarks, innuendoes or comments on sexual orientation.

Non-verbal conduct of an offensive nature: the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects or written materials, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures.

Conduct which denigrates or ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive to an employee because of his or her sex, race, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are so motivated and offensive comments about dress or appearance or physique, hygiene etc.

8. DUTY OF MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

All supervisors and managers are responsible for eliminating any forms of harassment or intimidation of which they are aware. Failure to do so will be treated as a failure to fulfil all the responsibilities of their position. Similarly, all supervisors and managers are responsible for eliminating less favourable treatment of disabled persons for a reason or reasons which relate to their disability. Again, failure to do so will be treated as a failure to fulfil all the responsibilities of their position.

No supervisor or manager shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's rejection of sexual advances or resistance to any racial abuse or abuse on the grounds of sexual orientation, age, religion or belief will be used as a basis for an employment decision affecting that employee. Such conduct shall be treated by the Archdiocese of Liverpool as a serious disciplinary offence by the supervisor or manager.

9. HARRASMENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is clearly inappropriate for the normal grievance procedure to be used for complaints of harassment particularly where the manager is the alleged harasser.

- 9.1 Wherever possible the person who believes that they are the subject of harassment should ask the person responsible to stop the harassing behaviour. Where this does not stop or some employment consequences result then a complaint under 9.2. below should be made.
- 9.2 An employee who believes that they have been the subject of harassment should report the alleged act to the appropriate line manager, director or a nominated officer of the employee's choice.
- 9.3 A timely investigation will be conducted into the complaint in a confidential manner. All parties will be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing.

In any serious case of alleged harassment either or both of the parties may be suspended on full pay pending the completion of the investigation. The victim will be interviewed preferably by a person of the same sex/race where appropriate. Confidentiality will be assured. A diary should be kept by the victim detailing the allegations and dates when they occurred.

- 9.4 If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, senior management will give it its prompt attention and disciplinary action will be taken to stop the harassment immediately and prevent its recurrence. In such circumstances if relocation proves necessary, every effort will be made to relocate the harasser and not the victim.
- 9.5 Employees shall also be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliation against an employee for complaining about harassment is a disciplinary offence and is also actionable through the Employment Tribunals.