

# HACKNEY STREET PASTORS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

## Scope

1. This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of **Hackney Street Pastors (“Street Pastors”)**.

## Context

2. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. (Galatians 3:28).
3. Street Pastors is a Christian movement committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, life-style, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor.
4. No person requiring services from Street Pastors will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds. We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and encouraging diversity in our workforce.
5. We recognise the value of and the need for equal opportunities and seek, wherever possible, to follow the guidelines drawn up by the relevant statutory body. Moreover, we recognise that the UK has a rich diversity of cultures from around the world and we seek to bring Christian witness equally to all cultures.

## Purpose

6. This equal opportunity policy reflects the mission and purpose Street Pastors as well as the spirit and intentions of legislation which outlaws discrimination. The purpose of this document is to provide information concerning equal opportunities and to provide guidelines to employees and volunteers on good practice.

## Definition

7. “*Discrimination*” for the purposes of this document means unlawful discrimination.

## Policy

8. Street Pastors is a Christian organisation which seeks to operate in and for the name of Christ. In relation to matters of religion and belief, it is a genuine occupational requirement for employees and volunteers to be loyal to the Christian ethos of the organisation in order to preserve its distinctiveness.
9. Subject to the above, Street Pastors will not tolerate unlawful discrimination and/or harassment on the grounds of an individual’s sex, race, marital status, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, religious belief, union membership, union activities or employment status.
10. In relation to those we serve, we are non-judgmental and will give time and unconditional love to anyone and everyone by way of caring, listening and helping.

11. It is the responsibility of every individual, both employees and volunteers to eliminate unlawful discrimination by ensuring practical application of this equal opportunity policy and reporting concerns about any possible breach to the Charity Trustees.

### **Implementation**

12. Street Pastors is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about ensuring good employment practices and the efficient use of Street Pastors most valuable resources: its employees and volunteers.
13. As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, the majority of Charity Trustees, the Street Pastors Coordinator and the Street Pastors volunteers can only be filled by Christians. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff and/or volunteers in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented under Equality Act 2010 and ACAS guidance.
14. In employment Street Pastors will 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. Subject to the genuine occupational requirement, entry into employment, promotion or change of post is determined by personal aptitude and ability, relevant to the mission and purpose of our organisation.
15. Subject to the genuine occupational requirement above, the selection and recruitment of volunteers are also determined by aptitude, ability and spiritual maturity, relevant to the mission and purpose of our organisation.

### **DBS**

16. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Street Pastors 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 subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
17. A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to 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.
18. Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the

recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.

19. Unless the nature of the position allows Street Pastors to ask questions about an entire criminal record, we will only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
20. We ensure that all those in Street Pastors who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of circumstances of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
21. At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
22. We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
23. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

## **Complaints**

24. Any employee or volunteer may use the Complaints Procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct or unlawful harassment. Street Pastors aim is to ensure that volunteers or employees feel able to raise grievances and that no individual will be penalised for doing so unless it is untrue or made in bad faith.
25. This policy also applies to the treatment of contractors, suppliers and those we serve. Any concern related to unequal treatment should be directed to the local trustees of the Street Pastor charity.

## **Discipline**

26. All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be treated seriously. Any employee or volunteer who unlawfully harasses any other employee or volunteer will be subject to the organisation’s disciplinary procedure. In serious cases such behaviour may be considered to be gross misconduct, and accordingly, could result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.