

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

This policy consists of two main parts:

- SCM's commitment to diversity and inclusion
- The equality and diversity policy, which covers employment and legal considerations

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SCM's commitment to diversity and inclusion

Student Christian Movement (SCM) strongly believes that everyone is equal in the sight of God. We believe that people's differences should not only be welcomed and supported, but celebrated. Equality and diversity is a key area of our work and this is demonstrated in part through the charity's aim 'celebrating diversity'. This is a very active area of our work.

Separate spaces are provided for members who belong to minority groups where SCM has a significant member base. These allow members to discuss relevant issues and bring suggestions to the movement related to their identity. Currently SCM runs closed Facebook groups for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other related minority identity (LGBTQ+) members and disabled members, and an annual event for LGBTQ+ members is run. We welcome interest in developing spaces for other groups of members.

Ensuring all members of SCM are represented in decision making is very important, and representative positions on General Council ensures minority groups are represented. Representative positions and portfolio positions for any area are welcomed, but SCM aims at any time to have the following positions filled:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)/Global Majority People (GMP) rep
- LGBTQ+ rep
- Access and inclusion portfolio/disabled students rep

We aim to make our services as accessible and responsive as possible to all existing and potential beneficiaries and to provide a service to them which recognises and respects their differences. We recognise that our ability to meet their needs is improved by having a diverse workforce which generally reflects those we work with.

We are committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and will make every effort to ensure that our services, communications and events are accessible to those who have visual, audio, cognitive and/or physical impairments or are neurodivergent, and those who are unable to communicate effectively in English. For events this includes, but is not limited to, ensuring venues are wheelchair accessible, providing quiet spaces and adding in sufficient breaks. This is covered in further detail in the events policy.

Beneficiary involvement

We seek to ensure that our services are sensitive and appropriate to the needs of all groups. We undertake to listen to our beneficiaries and involve them in the development of services which recognise and value their diversity.

Communication of this policy

All workers will be made aware of this policy on taking up employment, and will be reminded of the policy thereafter through such means as job descriptions, application forms, training and development opportunities and team meetings. Members will be aware of our commitment to diversity and inclusion through SCM's aims.

Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will take effect from 4th February 2023.

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and may be changed from time to time.

SCM will monitor its progress towards diversity by:

- monitoring the ethnic, gender, age and disability profile of our employees and job applicants to enable us to understand the composition of our workforce in order to identify any areas of inequality, and
- monitoring employee opinions and comments through feedback via the line managers.

Relevant data will be collected to support this policy. Personal details provided by employees or job applicants for the purposes of equal opportunity monitoring are confidential, will be kept apart from all other records and not used for any other purpose.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the CEO.

Equality and Diversity policy statement

SCM is committed to ensuring that all employees, workers, interns and work placements, volunteers, job applicants and Trustees, and other people we work with are treated with respect and dignity, and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

A key objective of our Equality and Diversity Policy is that we provide a working environment in which current and potential employees feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated fairly and equally, irrespective of age, disability, gender affirmation/reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("protected characteristics" as per the Equality Act 2010) or indeed any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which we treat beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries, visitors, suppliers, partners, stakeholders and former colleagues.

The success of our organisation depends on the people we work with. We recognise that an effective Equality and Diversity Policy will help everyone to develop to their full potential, which is clearly in the best interests of individuals and SCM.

We further recognise the benefits of employing individuals from a range of backgrounds, as this creates a workforce where creativity and valuing difference in others thrives. We value the wealth of experience within the community in which we operate and aspire to have a workforce that reflects this.

This policy covers all aspects of employment including advertisements, recruitment and selection, induction, pay, conditions of service, training and development, change management and grievance and disciplinary procedures.

This policy is not contractual, but sets out the way in which SCM aims to manage equality and address diversity in the workplace. We reserve the right to vary, replace or withdraw it at any time.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers (referred to collectively as "workers" for the purposes of this policy, where relevant) and Trustees.

Legal considerations

The main legislation that covers equal opportunities and discrimination is the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the following should be taken into consideration:

- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- the Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

- the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013
- any Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission

plus any amendments to the above legislation.

Definitions

Discrimination by or against a worker is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exception. Discrimination may occur intentionally or unintentionally, and can take different forms, for example:

- **direct discrimination:** treating an individual with one or more of the protected characteristics less favourably than others
- **indirect discrimination:** unjustified provisions, criterion or practice e.g. our policies, procedures or practices, which are applied to everyone, or groups of people, but have, or will have, the effect of putting those who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared to others
- **harassment:** unwanted conduct linked to a protected characteristic which violates an individual's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them
- **victimisation:** treating a person less favourably because they have committed a "protected act". "Protected acts" include making or supporting an allegation of discrimination, or giving evidence relating to an allegation of discrimination, or raising a grievance about equality or discrimination.
- **discrimination by association:** an individual is discriminated against because they associate with someone, e.g. a family member, who possesses a protected characteristic
- **discrimination by perception:** an individual is perceived as having a protected characteristic, irrespective of whether or not this perception is correct

On all occasions where those with managerial responsibility for workers are required to make decisions between them, for example disciplinary matters, selection for training, recruitment opportunities, pay increases, redundancy etc it is essential that merit, experience, skills and temperament are considered as objectively as possible.

Responsibility for this policy

The overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy rests with the Chief Executive Officer.

Managers have a crucial role to play in promoting equality of opportunity in their own areas of responsibility. As employers we are liable for the actions of our

workers, and therefore our managers are responsible for this policy's successful implementation and should take steps to ensure their team understand and follow this policy.

All workers, irrespective of their job or seniority, should familiarise themselves with this policy and be aware of their own responsibility and role in promoting equality of opportunity and not discriminating unfairly or harassing colleagues, job applicants or ex-workers, nor encouraging others to do so or tolerating such behaviour. Any worker who witnesses behaviour or decisions that seem contrary to this policy, or experience it directly, are encouraged to challenge these or raise the issues with their line manager or another manager within SCM.

Workers should be aware that not only is the employer liable for any cases of discrimination or harassment that occur, but individuals also may be held personally liable for their own acts and behaviour.

Aims of this policy

Our aim is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation or discrimination in any form that may affect the dignity of an individual.

Whilst we fully accept all of our responsibilities under the current legislation outlined above, we also aim to go beyond the confines of the law to provide equality of opportunity for all. We aim to:

- recognise that everyone has a right to their distinctive and diverse identities
- ensure that all workers are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment
- understand how diversity can improve our ability to provide better services, and therefore have a workforce which generally reflects the beneficiaries we serve
- provide services which are responsive to the needs of our beneficiaries
- provide all workers with the necessary support, training and development they need to contribute to SCM's objectives and goals
- provide a supportive, open environment where all workers may use their talents fully, and where workers and beneficiaries are treated fairly and with dignity and respect, in an environment free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour.

Learning to work with people's differences, visible or not, enables us to all work together effectively and helps us to anticipate and meet the needs of all of our beneficiaries; recruit, retain and develop the best people; act responsibly in the communities of which we are a part and also fulfil our legal commitments.

The working environment

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our working environment does not prevent people from taking up positions for which they are suitably qualified. This may include physical adaptations or more flexible ways of working (where appropriate and practical).

Terms and conditions of employment

Our employment policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, amend or adapt current practices to promote equality of opportunity within SCM, and to remove barriers experienced by members of disadvantaged social groups in seeking employment with us and working with us.

We will ensure that all of our employment policies including compensation, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated and applied without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination. Length of service as a qualifying criterion for benefits will not exceed five years unless clearly justifiable.

Recruitment and selection

We aim, through appropriate information, training and supervision, to ensure that all employees and Trustees who are responsible for recruitment and selection are familiar with this policy and apply it in conjunction with our recruitment and selection procedures.

We aim to ensure that our recruitment practices are free from unlawful discrimination. Our normal recruitment and selection processes will be adjusted where necessary to ensure applicants with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

Job adverts will normally state: "Equality of opportunity is central to everything we do. We positively encourage applications from suitably qualified/experienced individuals, regardless of sex, race, disability or other personal characteristics".

Job descriptions and person specifications will be reviewed to ensure that criteria are not applied which are either directly or indirectly discriminatory and that they do not impose any condition or requirement which cannot be justified by the demands of the post.

Where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for the post, all applicants will be informed of this and asked to provide information regarding their offending history as part of their application. This information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Shortlisting and interviewing will normally be carried out by at least three people, to minimise the risk of conscious or unconscious bias.

Selection will, as far as possible, be conducted on an objective basis and will focus on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements. Our interest is in the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and the potential of individuals to do the job.

Questions asked of candidates will relate to information that will help assess their ability to do the job. Questions about marriage plans, family intentions, religious or political beliefs, unless a Genuine Occupational Requirement applies to the role, caring responsibilities, intention to join our pension scheme or to opt out, or about any other issues which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination should not be asked. For roles requiring a DBS check we will ask all candidates invited to interview whether they have a criminal record of any description, and the response will be noted. Otherwise, we will only ask questions about "unspent" convictions that have been disclosed to us.

Selection tests will be specifically related to the job, measuring an individual's actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job.

We guarantee to interview all applicants who have informed us of a disability and who meet the minimum criteria for the role.

Training and development

We recognise that our ability to meet the diverse needs of our beneficiaries is improved by having a workforce which has the skills and understanding to achieve our objectives. All workers will be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their line manager. We are committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, all workers receive the widest possible range of development opportunities for advancement in line with the needs of SCM.

Induction training will include awareness of our Equality and Diversity Policy, and how it applies to individuals.

The provision of training will be reviewed to ensure that provisions are made where necessary to enable part-time workers, or those returning to work following a break to benefit from training.

Flexible Working

We recognise the benefits of helping our workers to balance the responsibilities of their work and private life. We will consider any requests for flexible working in a way which aims to balance the needs of the individual and our organisation.

Disability

We aim to provide a safe working environment for workers with disabilities. We will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and/or working arrangements for people with disabilities where they cause disadvantage to the person.

If, due to changing circumstances, an employee with disabilities is unable to carry out their existing duties, every effort will be made to find suitable alternative employment within the organisation, and retraining will be provided as necessary.

Where an employee without disabilities becomes disabled during their employment, we will make every effort to facilitate continued employment in their existing job. Where this is not possible, suitable alternative employment will be considered, and we may provide training and support as required.

Whilst we will make every effort to retain employees in these circumstances, we cannot make any guarantees about continued employment.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment, i.e. conduct that violates a person's dignity, or behaviour against an individual that is intimidating, degrading, offensive, humiliating or malicious will not be tolerated. It may be persistent actions or an isolated incident, and can take many forms from relatively mild banter to actual physical violence. It includes not only situations occurring whilst at work, but also at any time on our premises, or externally whilst attending social functions or training courses etc in the course of undertaking work activities for or on behalf of SCM. It also includes emails, phone calls and texts made outside of work using either our or the worker's own equipment, as well as via social media sites.

Any acts of bullying or harassment committed in the course of employment with SCM will not be tolerated. Any individual who feels that they have been subjected to harassment or bullying should, where they feel able to do so, inform the perpetrator, either verbally or in writing, that the behaviour is unacceptable to them and it must stop. Where this fails, or a serious incident of bullying or harassment occurs, the worker should refer to our Grievance Procedure (or, if a volunteer, discuss their concern with a manager).

Equally, anyone who witnesses incidents of harassment or bullying should report this to their line manager or another SCM manager.

Serious examples of bullying and harassment may constitute gross misconduct which could lead to summary dismissal, in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure.

Grievances, disputes and disciplinary procedure

Employees who believe they have been discriminated against should bring this to our attention as soon as possible. In the first instance, employees are encouraged to do this informally, but where it has not been possible to resolve this informally, or where the matter is particularly serious, they are advised to use our Grievance Procedure. An employee who brings a genuine complaint of discrimination must not be victimised or less favourably treated as a result. However, allegations made for malicious reasons or in pursuit of a personal grudge will be managed under the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken that employees who have, are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic are not dismissed or disciplined for performance, conduct or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in other employees.

References

We will not discriminate against individuals who have left SCM by providing references that are not based on factual information.

Retirement

We have no fixed retirement age and employees who wish to work beyond State Pension Age may choose to do so.

Offending history

SCM recognises that a proportion of the population has been convicted of a criminal offence at some time in their lives, and that ex-offenders therefore form a large and valuable potential source of our workforce.

Applications from ex-offenders are welcomed and will be considered on merit. SCM will not discriminate, during recruitment or employment, on the grounds of a criminal record. Convictions that are irrelevant to the role will not be taken into account and having a criminal record will not prevent a person from working with SCM.

However, some roles within SCM are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation and it is possible that some people who want to work with us may have an offending history that is incompatible with our work. A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and where relevant, a barred list check, will be carried out as appropriate on new and existing workers, and prospective and current workers in such roles must declare all criminal convictions, spent and unspent. This information will be taken into account when deciding on the individual's suitability for the role and/or working with vulnerable groups. No one will be permitted to undertake an exempt role without a satisfactory DBS check.

SCM uses an "umbrella body" to process our DBS checks; we may change our umbrella body from time to time, depending upon cost, efficiency or other factors. We will ensure that all those who are involved in the process of using information about criminal records and/or DBS certificates have been suitably trained to identify the relevance and circumstances of offences.

Positive action

We recognise that passive policies will not reverse the discrimination experienced by many groups of people.

Positive discrimination (selecting a candidate purely on grounds of membership of a particular minority group) is unlawful, however we may decide to take positive action to help workers or applicants who:

- are at a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic, and/or
- are under-represented in our organisation, and/or
- have special requirements connected to a protected characteristic.

Examples of measures include:

- actively encouraging applications from groups under-represented within the organisation
- taking positive action in favour of under-represented groups in the workforce when choosing between candidates who are otherwise equally qualified
- providing specific training or development opportunities aimed at under-represented groups to enable them to compete equally for job opportunities with the remaining workforce.

Any measure taken should not be construed as positive discrimination.

Worker Involvement

We will take appropriate steps to encourage the participation of all workers to ensure that, wherever possible, our employment practices recognise and meet their needs. We will involve our workers in determining what can be done to make sure they develop and use their abilities at work.