



Equal Opportunities Policy

Taunton Baptist Church (TBC) is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all fields of its activity in accordance with this policy document. There are two policy statements which address the two areas applicable to TBC: employment (Part 5: 'Work'; Equality Act 2010); and membership (Part 7: 'Associations'; Equality Act 2010).



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1. Definitions

- 1.1 **'Protected Characteristics'** There are nine characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 1.2 **'Direct Discrimination'** is where a person is treated less favourably than others are, or would be, for a reason related to one or more of the 'Protected Characteristics'.
- 1.3 **'Indirect Discrimination'** occurs where an individual is subject to a provision, criterion or practice which one protected group finds more difficult to comply with than another (even though on the face of it the provision is neutral).

2. Employment Policy Statement

As an equal opportunities employer, TBC will seek to ensure that:

- 2.1 Every job applicant and employee has the right not be treated less favourably as a result of one or more Protected Characteristics except:
- in relation to religious belief where being a Christian or complying with a requirement related to religious belief is an occupational requirement having regard to the ethos of TBC and the nature of the employment or the context in which it is carried out; and
 - in relation to marriage or civil partnership where any job applicant / employee in a sexual relationship must be married to a person of the opposite sex given that the employment is for the purposes of an organised religion and in accordance with the ethos of TBC.
- 2.2 Persons already employed will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.
- 2.3 The application of any recruitment, training and promotion policies will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria and based solely on job requirements and the individual's ability and fitness for that work.
- 2.4 All persons responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees will be given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.



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- 2.5 Appropriate training will be provided to enable employees to perform their jobs effectively and uphold the commitment to equality of opportunity.
- 2.6 Encouragement is given to all employees to take advantage of opportunities for training.
- 2.7 Any age limits imposed for entry to training will be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim and will not unnecessarily exclude certain groups of employees.
- 2.8 Recruitment, literature and advertisements will not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants as against another unless there is an occupational requirement which will be clearly stated, and the application of that requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 2.9 The most effective ways will be employed to bring job vacancies to the attention of potentially disadvantaged groups.
- 2.10 Applicants for posts will be given clear, accurate and sufficient information through advertisement, job descriptions and interviews, to enable them to assess their own suitability for a post.
- 2.11 The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter or remain in employment with TBC. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited, and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that any disabled staff participate fully in the workplace.
- 2.12 Employment policies and procedures will be kept under review, in appropriate cases by formal monitoring routines, to ensure that they do not operate against this Policy Statement.
- 2.13 Where it appears that this Policy Statement is not being observed, the circumstances will be investigated to see if there are any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage employees and, if so, whether these policies and criteria are justifiable.
- 2.14 Appropriate action will be taken where necessary to redress the effects of any action, policy or criteria which are found to have unjustifiably limited the observance of this Policy Statement.
- 2.15 Particular care will be taken to deal with any complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic.



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2.16 A criminal record will not in itself be a bar to being appointed to any post; only relevant offences will be considered when appointing to a post where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required.

3. Association Policy Statement

TBC is an equal opportunities association and will seek to ensure that:

- 3.1 Every member and guest has the right not be treated less favourably as a result of one or more Protected Characteristics except:
 - in relation to religious belief where being a Christian or complying with a requirement related to religious belief is a requirement of membership having regard to the ethos of TBC; and
 - in relation to marriage or civil partnership where any member in a sexual relationship must be married to a person of the opposite sex and in accordance with the ethos of TBC given that membership is of an organised religion.
- 3.2 Existing members will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.
- 3.3 All persons responsible for the interviewing and recommending of potential members will be given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.
- 3.4 The requirements of members and guests who have or have had a disability will be reviewed and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled members/guest can participate fully in TBC activities.
- 3.5 Other policies (e.g. Health and safety) and procedures will be kept under review to ensure that they do not operate against this Policy Statement.
- 3.6 Where it appears that this Policy Statement is not being observed, the circumstances will be investigated to see if there are any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage members/guests and, if so, whether these policies and criteria are justifiable.
- 3.7 Appropriate action will be taken where necessary to redress the effects of any action, policy or criteria which are found to have unjustifiably limited the observance of this Policy Statement.
- 3.8 Particular care will be taken to deal with any complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic.
- 3.9 A criminal record will not in itself be a bar to becoming a member; only relevant offences will be considered when appointing to a voluntary role where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required.



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4. Summary

- 4.1 TBC recognises its responsibilities for ensuring equal opportunities to employees, members and guests.
- 4.2 The charity trustees have overall responsibility for equal opportunities and for ensuring adherence to the policy.
- 4.3 This document is available online (<https://tauntonbaptist.org/members/policies/>) and from the church office.
- 4.4 This policy document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and Baptist Together guidance document L08.

Signed:

Revd Richard Matcham, Minister

On behalf of the Trustees, as agreed at a meeting on: