



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

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### **Policy Statement**

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SGPC recognises that the United Kingdom is a society diverse in race, culture, and interests and that this diversity is to be welcomed. We intend that all members of society should enjoy equal access to the opportunities available through the work of the Council.

SGPC recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are oppressed and disadvantaged due to discrimination directed against them.

Discrimination operates through commonly held assumptions and prejudices, which are reinforced by laws, rules, and customs. This makes discrimination appear normal and inevitable. Discrimination works by stereotyping people into different roles, by treating some people worse than others, or simply by ignoring them.

SGPC is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of Protected Characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act 2010; these are,

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

SGPC recognises that the promotion of equal opportunities requires more than passive opposition to discrimination; we are therefore committed to taking positive action towards equality of opportunity. We further recognise that the limited resources and the operational needs of the Council may impose justifiable restrictions upon our ability to take such action. However, we will undertake regular monitoring and review the effectiveness of this Policy.

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### **Equal Opportunities Policy Implementation**

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1. SGPC is committed to promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of the operation of the Council's activities including management, employment practices with both paid and unpaid workers, access to services and service provision.
2. The Council shall ensure that it acts in such a way that no individual or group referred to in this policy is discriminated against, in particular:
  - by making arrangements to accommodate the needs of members and staff including appropriate travel and care costs.
  - by providing information in a way that is accessible to all.
  - by meeting in premises with facilities which are physically accessible to those participating.
  - by encouraging representation to the Council of all groups facing discrimination.

- by making training in discrimination awareness and equal opportunities available to all members of the Council and paid and unpaid staff.
3. The recruitment of paid and unpaid staff shall be undertaken in accordance with this policy, in particular:
- by ensuring that posts are advertised in such a way as to encourage applications from groups experiencing discrimination.
  - by preparing job descriptions which clearly set out what the worker is to do, and person specifications which recognise that relevant experience can be as valuable as qualifications or previous paid employment.
  - by ensuring that in all selection procedures only factors relevant to the requirements of the post are taken into account, and that the spirit of the policy statement is adhered to.
  - a copy of this policy is to be sent to prospective applicants for all posts.
4. The employment of paid and unpaid staff shall be undertaken in accordance with this policy, in particular:
- by providing training relevant to the needs of staff and designed to enable them to carry out their jobs.
  - by ensuring that any staff member who, in the course of their work, displays attitudes contrary to this policy to any person whether by word, behaviour or other manner shall be liable to disciplinary action.
  - by recognising and responding to the individual needs of staff, especially those who are carers or who have disabilities, and ensuring that, within available resources, the necessary support is provided to enable them to work effectively.
5. In every aspect of the planning, management, access, provision and monitoring of services, the management committee and staff shall seek to promote equality of opportunity in accordance with this policy, in particular:
- by improving physical access to the centre for all individuals.
  - by seeking to identify and respond to the needs of those groups experiencing discrimination, altering priorities and methods of service delivery where necessary.
  - by liaison and consultation with relevant groups and by regular analysis of the user profiles, to monitor the extent to which services are being taken up by groups experiencing discrimination.

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### **Reporting discrimination/potential discrimination**

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Employees who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise the issue with their line manager.

Volunteers who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should raise the issue with the Line Manager/Parish Clerk.

Service users who feel that they have suffered any form of discrimination should report to the Parish Clerk.

Employees, volunteers, and service users should also use this approach if they feel that they been the subject of harassment from someone who is not an employee of SGPC. SGPC will not tolerate any harassment from third parties towards its employees, volunteers or service users and will take appropriate action to prevent it happening again.

If an employee, volunteer and/or service user witnesses behaviour that they find offensive in relation to age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, even if it is not directed at them they should also use this procedure.

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**Monitoring and review**

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The Council shall regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in achieving the stated aims. This process shall be undertaken annually, shall include the review of each component of the implementation policy, and shall seek the views of organisations representing the interests of those groups referred to in this policy.

Updated March 2022  
Updated May 2022  
Updated May 2023