



## **Equality and Diversity Policy** *St Mary's Church, Haverhill*

**Policy last reviewed and adopted by PCC:** Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Policy due for review:** Annually after APCM

**The Parochial Church Council of St Mary's, Haverhill (the 'PCC')** is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our members, activities and projects and the eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for all to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each member to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation – in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities – is also committed against unlawful discrimination of the members of the church or the public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our membership.
- not unlawfully discriminate because of protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.
- recognise that, as a Christian organisation committed to upholding the teaching, belief and practice of the Church of England, there is sometimes a genuine occupational requirement to restrict appointments to those who agree with these aims and purposes.
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination.

The PCC commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in all activities.
- create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.
- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow members, the public and any others in the course of the church's activities

- review membership practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- monitor the make-up of the membership regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy.

These commitments include offering training opportunities to all employees and volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include all conducting themselves to help the PCC to provide equal opportunities in all activities, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All persons should understand they, as well as the PCC, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their membership, against fellow members and the public.

The PCC has a policy on anti-bullying as well a safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.