

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)  
IPSWICH & DISS AREA MEETING  
EQUALITY POLICY**

**Statements of Faith**

*Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one. (George Fox 1656)*

*At the centre of Friends' religious experience is the repeatedly and consistently expressed belief in the fundamental equality of all members of the human race. Our common humanity transcends our differences...We aspire not to say or to do anything or condone any statements or actions which imply lack of respect for the humanity of any person. (Meeting for Sufferings, 1988, Quaker faith & practice 23.36)*

As Quakers we recognise the equal worth and unique nature of every person. This means working to change systems that hinder true community. We try to be alert to practices in our own organisation and elsewhere which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs. We try to discern new growing points in social, institutional or economic life and seek to understand the causes of any sense of injustice, or disquietude. We try to work together to bring about a just and compassionate community which allows everyone to develop their capacities and fosters the desire to serve

**1. Equality Statement**

- 1.1 Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting is a Quaker employer and seeks to uphold the Quaker principle of equality of all persons through all its employment practices.
- 1.2 The Quaker commitment to equality, alongside our other commitments to peace, truth and integrity, and simplicity and sustainability, makes it essential that in all that we undertake we work towards equality and fairness for all sections of society. We recognise that our everyday realities are shaped by how we are treated by other people. We fervently aim to avoid unjustifiable and unlawful discrimination in our employment practices, including but not limited to recruitment and selection, promotion, training and development, pay and benefits, discipline and grievance. Our Local Meetings are committed to creating a work place where all employees feel respected, and are able to fulfill their potential, enjoy their work with us and give their best.

The Trustees of Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting require its staff to respect each person and to promote and uphold its commitment to equality.

Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting Trustees will abide by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and relevant codes of practice that makes it unlawful for Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting or its employees to harass visitors or other employees or to directly or indirectly discriminate in employment in relation to nine "Protected Characteristics", namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 1.3 All staff should feel able to challenge issues around equality in an appropriate and constructive way. Any employee who feels that he/she has been discriminated against should raise the matter by following the steps set out in the Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting's Grievance Procedure. Friends or visitors should report any similar

concerns they have to the Local Meeting Warden, Clerk or Elder, as they judge appropriate in the circumstances.

- 1.4 The Trustees of the Area Meeting will investigate any reported incidents of alleged discrimination. Any member of staff who is found to have discriminated against any other in the course of their employment may be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with *Area Meeting's disciplinary procedures*.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all practices whereby people resources are required for to maintain our Local Meetings and our Area Meeting business. It includes job applicants and potential applicants, all employees including temporary employees, agency staff, consultants, secondees, trustees, committee members, volunteers, contractors, visitors, suppliers and any students on work experience.

## **3. Related Policies & Procedures**

- 3.1 The Area Meeting and Local Meetings have a range of workplace arrangements and operating notes, all of which are expected to be applied in the spirit of our testimony to equality.
- 3.2 The Area Meeting also operates a limited number of other policies which relate to the employment of our staff and which are also guided by this equality policy. They include:

Discipline & Capability

Grievance

Health & Safety

Data Protection

Internal Financial Controls

Employee contracts of employment, including pay and conditions

## **4. Objectives**

- 4.1 To ensure that Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting and its Local Meetings uphold the Quaker belief in and commitment to equality.
- 4.2 To ensure that Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting complies with its statutory obligations under relevant legislation and equality codes of practice.
- 4.3 To create an environment in which individual differences and the contribution of all our employed staff are recognised and valued and to ensure that staff are aware of, and understand their obligations in relation to equality.
- 4.4 To enable each individual to prosper in an environment characterised by dignity and respect, where no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated.
- 4.5 To view positively every employee's individuality and to value their equal contribution.

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Trustees, Elders and Premises Committees**

- 5.1.1 Local Meeting Premises Committees, Elders and Area Meeting Trustees have the responsibility to uphold the Quaker belief in equality, acting at all times in a non-discriminatory, fair and consistent manner in their dealings with others.
- 5.1.2 Local Meeting Premises Committees, Elders and Area Meeting Trustees have the responsibility to ensure that the standards set out in this policy are adhered to within their areas of responsibility so that each of their Local Meetings is a coherent and effective community.
- 5.1.3 Allegations of discrimination or harassment by Quaker worshippers, staff, members of the public or users of the Area or Local Meetings facilities will be investigated by the local Premises Committee convener or Elder, or other responsible Friend appointed by the Area Meeting Trustees, and action taken where necessary, as provided for in the staff disciplinary procedure or in the Area Meeting's whistleblowing procedures ( section 4 of the *Financial Crime and Abuse Policy*)
- 5.1.4 Local Meeting Premises Committees, Elders and Area Meeting Trustees have the responsibility to familiarise themselves with this policy, follow it, and ensure that any staff for whom they are responsible do so as well for the good of the Area Meeting and Local Meetings.
- 5.1.5 Local Meeting Premises Committees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is implemented in relation to their staff and Elders are responsible for implementing this policy in relation to all Friends in the worshipping community.

### **5.2 Staff**

- 5.2.1 All employees have the responsibility to uphold the Quaker testimony to equality and to accept the practical implementation of this policy.
- 5.2.2 All employees have the responsibility to try to be models of good practice in all aspects of equality.

## **6. Implementing this policy**

- 6.1 Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting Trustees will ensure equality throughout all employment practices through the following measures.

### **6.2 Recruitment & Selection**

- Recruitment and employment decisions taken by Local Meetings will based on fair and objective criteria.
- All vacancy advertisements will include a statement on Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting's commitment to equality.
- Person and job specifications will be limited to those criteria that are necessary for effective performance in the role.

### **6.3 Work-Life Balance**

Where it can be accommodated, Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting Trustees through the Local Meeting Premises Committees will agree to flexible working requests.

### **6.4 Workplace Faith Practices**

It is Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting's policy that staff recruited in all its Local Meetings do not need to be Quaker or hold any faith. The Trustees respect the need for some staff to observe their different faith. Therefore requests for annual leave to attend religious festivals or to pray will be respected and accommodated as far as practicable.

### **6.5 Disability**

Where necessary Local Meetings will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees, staff and Friends with disabilities to ensure they are able to play a full and active part in the meeting's work and worship.

## **7. Monitoring and Review of this policy**

The Trustees will review this policy at least biennially and encourage its application across all its Local Meetings.

Signed; Christina van Melzen (Clerk)

Date, 09/11/2016