

CAPERNWRAY EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

**There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female,
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Galatians 3: 28

INTRODUCTION

Capernwray is a Christian evangelical missionary fellowship whose purpose is to 'proclaim the transforming presence of Jesus Christ'. We exist to serve Christ for the benefit of those who are seeking to know Him or know Him better.

At Capernwray we believe that everyone's true identity is to be found in Jesus Christ. We believe that all men and women are made in the image of God, with an innate dignity from conception, and that, in Christ, all are innately of equal value and worth in His sight. Christians are also instructed not to show favouritism. Capernwray is therefore committed to principles of equal opportunity. As well as biblical principles, there are legal obligations. We therefore require all to respect and act in accordance with this policy.

We will always operate on the basis of our biblical beliefs about Christian faith and conduct. This policy highlights some particular considerations regarding equality and diversity at Capernwray.

Our primary goal is to proclaim and celebrate the indwelling life of Christ, and we want all other considerations to remain secondary to that core mission. We hope and pray that, as his followers indwelt with his Spirit, we will reflect his love and inclusion in all your dealings with us and that your experience will be of a loving, inclusive, Christ-centred community.

SCOPE

Staff

The obligations under this policy cover all employees as well as all job applicants and other staff. This policy cannot be applied directly to volunteers, contractors or third parties (but if any related issues become apparent in relation to such individuals, these will be raised with them where appropriate).

Service users

Capernwray is set up to serve students and holiday guests who are seeking to know Christ or to know him better. However, anyone from any or no religious conviction/background is welcome as a student or holiday guest. The benefits of this policy extend to all those using our services.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination occurs when someone directly or indirectly treats a person or a group of people less favourably. It may also be unlawful when it relates to a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics include: race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, disability.

Any reference to 'discrimination' in this policy means unlawful discrimination.

Although there may be circumstances justifying different treatment, which are not unlawful (for example: to comply with an occupational requirement for a position; or to make an adjustment in order to accommodate a person with a disability), Capernwray will not tolerate discrimination.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where one individual treats another individual, on grounds of a protected characteristic, less favourably than he treats or would treat other persons.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition is applied generally (and not because of a protected characteristic), but which is such that it has a detrimental impact upon a protected group that cannot be objectively justified.

Disability Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 sets out an additional obligation upon organisations to make “reasonable adjustments” so that a disabled employee/job applicant or service user is not substantially disadvantaged. Capernwray will accordingly make reasonable adjustments in order to help those with disabilities to have access to the same career opportunities and services as others.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is, in general terms, unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another.

Harassment may be unlawful, particularly where the harassment occurs because of a protected characteristic.

CHRISTIAN ETHOS

Capernwray's Christian beliefs may mean that personal characteristics will lawfully and properly inform decisions¹. However, this does not detract from the principle that Capernwray is an Equal Opportunity organisation.

All job applicants will be assessed against the job description and any person specification (in accordance with the candidate's merits, qualification and ability to perform the role and to meet any occupational requirement, the needs of Capernwray and those it serves).

All service users will need to comply with our behavioural standards. These reflect our beliefs.

For the avoidance of doubt, discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or absence of religious belief will not be tolerated.

RESPONSIBILITY

All Capernwray's employees must:

- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity
- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practise discrimination
- Not treat anyone less favourably as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination (“Victimisation”)
- Not subject others to harassment

All service users should conduct themselves in the same way.

Where there are breaches of this Policy, Capernwray will take appropriate action.

For employees, this may include taking steps through the disciplinary procedure; serious incidents may be treated as gross misconduct. False allegations of discrimination or harassment that are not made in good faith will also be viewed seriously.

For service users, this may include withdrawing provision of the service.

¹ For example, it may be necessary for an employee of Capernwray to agree with its statement of faith as set out on the website as well as its aims and objectives. However, care will be taken to regularly review the situation and assess (for example prior to advertising any position of employment) whether the nature of the position or its context mean that an occupational requirement is i) necessary; and ii) that it is proportionate to apply the requirement in respect of the position.

We will review the operation of this policy in order to ensure we continue to avoid discrimination.

If any employee is concerned about any breaches of this Policy, they should raise their concerns with the HR & Compliance Officer. Alternatively, formal complaints can be made under the Capernwray Complaints Procedure.

If any service user is concerned about any breaches of this Policy, they should raise their concerns with the HR & Compliance Officer. Alternatively, formal complaints can be made under the Capernwray Complaints Procedure.

DOCTRINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We accept the whole Bible as the inspired revelation of God to man. Our beliefs deriving from this are reflected in our teaching and practices. Some of these are set out below.

We are aware that others may have different convictions. We welcome the right of all members of our community to freely discuss and debate our beliefs and the issues arising from them, but ask that this is done with gentleness and respect.

Staff in positions where there is an occupational requirement need to share our beliefs.

Service users do not need to share any of our beliefs in order to use our services, but in their conduct, they should respect them.

Compassion

We live in a fallen world where not every biological or psychological experience reflects God's will. The gospel of redemption does not mean that God rescues us from all struggles in this life, but it does mean that he redeems us through them. In the new heavens and the new earth we will enjoy the full restoration of our bodies and minds. Simultaneous with these convictions is our certainty that Jesus welcomes anyone who comes to him.

We are all walking together in community towards increasing Christ-likeness in which we find our core identity as we increasingly find him. It is not ultimately found in anything else, including our biological sex, gender identity or earthly relationships. We don't underestimate the challenge that the position outlined below presents to many, nor how complex and inter-related are the corresponding issues of sexual desire, celibacy, identity, singleness and genuine Christian community.

We strive to be a community that loves and welcomes all as neighbours, rather than one that condemns and rejects. We trust that everyone's experience here is one of love, compassion and empathy.

Sex: Male and Female

There are two distinct and complementary biological sexes which define an important aspect of Christ's relationship to his church. Biological sex is an essential aspect of personhood. It is neither pliable nor non-binary².

We acknowledge the reality and struggle of gender dysphoria³ for some individuals. Although gender is socially shaped to an extent, we do not believe it to be a mere social construct. We believe that an emphasis of chosen-ness over given-ness and changeability over stability can be at odds with the gospel (individualism and self-government).

Sexual Expression and Marriage

Outside any legal definition, we believe marriage according to the Bible to be a lifelong union between one man and one woman for life and to the exclusion of all others⁴.

² We acknowledge the intersex condition, which we consider distinct from gender reassignment.

³ Recognised by the NHS as when "a person experiences discomfort or distress because there's a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity."

⁴ Matthew 19: 4 - 6

We believe that the only God-ordained context for sexual expression is between a husband and wife within such marriage.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

If we taught, advanced or acquiesced in something different from the above doctrinal position, we believe we would not be honouring Christ and we could lead others to stumble.

Code for sexual conduct

Our code for sexual conduct reflects these convictions.

For so long as service users/staff are part of our community, we require celibacy from those who are not within such marriage.

Accommodation

Almost all of Capernwray's accommodation is in shared rooms. Residential accommodation is single sex⁵, with the exception of those within such marriage.

We have a very limited number of single rooms where it may be possible to house students, guests or staff. These are available on a first come first served basis for those with reasonable need for a single room.

We have a limited number of wheelchair accessible rooms. These are available on a first come first served basis for those with reasonable need for such a room.

We are open to discuss arrangements in advance with any potential resident (or their parent/guardian) where there may be particular needs or where such accommodation could present a difficulty. We strongly recommend such conversations are initiated as soon as possible.

Naming and personal pronouns

As a basic courtesy Capernwray staff, students and guests will be encouraged to use the name and personal pronoun requested and preferred by any adult individual. (In the case of under-18-year-olds our usage will be guided by the parent or guardian.)

We would not compel anyone to address another using a name or pronoun they feel compromises their conscience/religious beliefs, but would expect them to instead limit use of any name or pronoun contrary to the individual's expressed preference and to continue to act with respect and gentleness in all interactions.

Toilets & Changing Facilities

Most toilets and changing rooms at Capernwray are designated as either male or female. There are, however, a number of individual cubicles around the site. Our request and expectation is that when residents do access a gender-specific toilet or changing room they use the one appropriate for their sex⁶.

Specific Specialist Requirements

Many of Capernwray's facilities are housed in a 19th century country house, meaning some of the site is not easily accessible to those with a disability. However, renovations, adaptations and new buildings have made all the major meeting rooms, several toilets and many en-suite bedrooms wheelchair-accessible.

As Capernwray's resources for the adequate care of those with specific specialist requirements are limited, to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals and third parties the admission of those with such requirements will not exceed our capacity or capability (taking into account any reasonable adjustments).

⁵ Sex to be determined by passport or similar official state identification, subject to any gender recognition certificate

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Those with particular needs should alert us to them early in the application process to ensure we can offer as much assistance as possible, including considering and putting in place any reasonable adjustments.

Pastoral Care & Additional Resources

Capernwray is a Bible School and Christian Holiday Centre at which residents normally stay for a short time only. Permanent staff are strongly encouraged to join local churches.

Capernwray is not a centre for intensive pastoral counselling, although informal pastoral conversations are frequent. Residents in need of such support are strongly encouraged to seek longer-term help in their home settings.

For a fuller understanding of Capernwray's theological and pastoral perspectives on issues such as sexual orientation or gender identity the following resources might help:

- We work regularly with [True Freedom Trust](#) and use the resources of [Living Out](#), two British Christian ministries who help the church engage with issues surrounding sexuality. Their websites offer numerous helpful resources.
- We are a member organisation of the UK Evangelical Alliance, who have produced a helpful summary from the same perspective on same-sex attraction that we hold [here](#). The EA also has helpful resources on Transgender issues [here](#).

Reviewed March 2019