

SPS Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities Policy

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO WORK, LEARN, & WORSHIP



1. Purpose and Statement of policy

- 1.1. Southgate Progressive Synagogue (hereafter referred to as SPS) is committed to equal opportunities for all staff, volunteers, and members.
- 1.2. It is our policy that all employment, election to office, and deployment decisions are based on merit and the legitimate needs of the organisation.

SPS does not discriminate on the bases of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, nationality, pregnancy or maternity, race / ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other ground on which it is or becomes unlawful to discriminate under the laws of England, Wales, and Scotland (referred to as **Protected Characteristics**; Equality Act 2010).

- 1.3. Our intention is to enable all our employees and volunteers to work in an environment which allows them to fulfil their potential without fear of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

SPS's commitment to equal opportunities extends to all aspects of the working relationships in the synagogue and community including:

- recruitment and selection procedures;
- terms of employment, including pay, conditions, and benefits;
- terms and conditions for volunteers and being SPS members;
- training, appraisal, and development;
- work practices, conduct issues, allocation of tasks, discipline, and grievances;
- SPS-related social events; and social events for employees
- termination of employment and matters after termination, including references.

- 1.4. This policy is intended to help the SPS achieve its diversity and anti-discriminatory aims by clarifying the responsibilities and duties of all staff and volunteers in respect of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. SPS will promote effective communication and consultation between the Trustees (Executive and Council) and staff / volunteers concerning equal opportunities by the means it considers appropriate.
- 1.5. The principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities also apply to the way in which SPS staff and volunteers treat members, visitors, contractors, suppliers, former staff members, and members of the public

- 1.6. This is a statement of policy only and does not form part of any contract of employment, unless stated in such contract. This policy will be reviewed regularly and may be amended from time to time by the Trustees, in absolute discretion.

2. Who is responsible for equal opportunities?

- 2.1. Achieving an equal opportunities establishment is a collective task shared between the SPS Trustees, employees, volunteers, and members. This policy and the guidance contained in it therefore apply equally to all of us at or associated with SPS, including consultants and contractors, casual or agency staff, and trainees.
- 2.2. The Trustees (SPS Executive and Council) have overall responsibility for this policy and for equal opportunities and discrimination law compliance in the organisation and the SPS Chair, Vice-Chair, and Honorary Secretary have day-to-day operational responsibility for supervising these matters.
- 2.3. All SPS staff, volunteers and members have personal responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy, to always treat colleagues with dignity and not to discriminate against or harass other employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors, suppliers, and former staff members. In addition, SPS Trustees who take part in management, recruitment, selection, teaching, training, and other aspects of development have specific responsibility for leading by example and ensuring compliance.
- 2.4. Trustees must take all necessary steps to:
 - promote the objective of equal opportunities and the values set out in this policy;
 - ensure that their own behaviour and those of the staff and volunteers they manage complies in full with this policy;
 - ensure that any complaints of discrimination, victimisation, or harassment (including against themselves) are dealt with appropriately and are not suppressed or disregarded.

3. What is discrimination?

- 3.1. Discrimination occurs in different ways, some more obvious than others. Discrimination on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics, as detailed in 1.2. above, is prohibited by law, even if unintentional, unless a particular exception applies.

Direct discrimination

- 3.2. Direct Discrimination is less favourable treatment because of one of the Protected Characteristics.

- 3.3. Direct discrimination can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess the Protected Characteristic but is perceived to have it or associates with other people who do.

Indirect discrimination

- 3.4. Indirect discrimination arises when an employer or manager applies an apparently neutral provision, criterion, or practice which in fact puts individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic at a disadvantage, statistically, and this is unjustified.
To show discrimination the individual complaining also must have been personally disadvantaged. (An example would be a requirement for candidates to have ten years' experience in a particular role, since this will be harder for young people / newer members to satisfy).
This kind of discrimination is unlawful unless it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Victimisation

- 3.5. Victimisation means treating a person less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination or have provided information in connection with a complaint or because they might do one of these things.

Harassment

- 3.6. Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic (within the Equality Act 2010) which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- 3.7. Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature, or it may be related to age, race, colour, or nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy, or maternity.
- 3.8. Harassment can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess a Protected Characteristic but is perceived to have it or associates with other people who possess a Protected Characteristic.
- 3.9. A person may also be subject to harassment even if they were not the intended target. For example, a person may be harassed by a sexist joke about a different gender if it created an offensive environment for them to work in.

3.10. Harassment may include:

- use of insults or slurs based on a Protected Characteristic or of a sexual nature or other verbal abuse or derogatory, offensive, or stereotyping jokes or remarks;
- physical or verbal abuse, threatening or intimidating behaviour because of a Protected Characteristic or behaviour of a sexual nature;
- unwelcome physical contact including touching, hugging, kissing, pinching, or patting, brushing past, invading personal space, pushing, grabbing or other assaults;
- mocking, mimicking, or belittling a person's disability, appearance, accent, or other personal characteristics;
- unwelcome requests for sexual acts or favours; verbal sexual advances, vulgar, sexual, suggestive, or explicit comments or behaviour;
- repeated requests, either explicitly or implicitly, for dates;
- repeated requests for social contact or after it has been made clear that requests are unwelcome;
- comments about body parts or sexual preference;
- displaying or distributing offensive or explicit pictures, items or materials relating to a Protected Characteristic or of a sexual nature;
- shunning or ostracising someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from conversations or activities;
- 'outing' or threatening to 'out' someone's sexual orientation (i.e. to make it known);
- explicit or implicit suggestions that employment / volunteering status or progression is related to toleration of, or acquiescence to sexual advances, or other behaviour amounting to harassment;
- racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, and stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
- posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, and emblems; and
- isolation from normal work or study places, conversations, or social events.

3.11. Other important points to note about harassment:

- a single incident can amount to harassment;
- behaviour that has continued for a lengthy period without complaint can amount to harassment;
- it is not necessary for an individual to intend to harass someone for their behaviour to amount to being harassment;
- it is not necessary for an individual to communicate that behaviour is unwelcome before it amounts to harassment; and
- the onus is on everyone to be certain that their behaviour and conduct is appropriate and is not unwanted and in the case of doubt, one must refrain from such conduct.

Disability discrimination

- 3.12. This could be direct or indirect discrimination and is any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

4. Disabled persons

- 4.1. Any employee, volunteer or member who considers that they may have a disability is strongly encouraged to speak with the SPS Chair or Vice Chair, particularly if they experience difficulties at SPS because of their disability so that any reasonable adjustments to help overcome or minimise difficulties can be discussed.

For these purposes, disability includes any physical or mental impairment which substantially affects an individual's ability to perform day to day activities and has lasted (or is likely to last) more than 12 months.

Disclosure of this information will be treated in confidence, if the individual wishes it to be, as far as is reasonably practicable, and we will do our best to handle matters sensitively and to ensure that all are treated with dignity and with respect for their privacy.

- 4.2. We will consult with individuals about whether adjustments are needed to avoid them being disadvantaged and may ask an individual employee to see a doctor appointed by SPS, to advise on this and/or complete a Health questionnaire.

SPS will seek to accommodate individual needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment to be unreasonable, we will explain why and try to find an alternative solution.

SPS 'managers' with responsibility for managing a member of staff or volunteer who they know or think to be disabled should speak to the SPS Chair or Vice Chair to ensure that all relevant duties are complied with.

5. Making fair employment / volunteering decisions

- 5.1. As noted above, the SPS will recruit employees and volunteers based on objective criteria and make other related decisions concerning training, dismissal, and related issues on this basis.
- 5.2. People in a supervisory position should only stipulate criteria or conditions for employment / volunteering decisions that are based on a legitimate operational need, and which do not go further than is necessary to satisfy that need.

If an individual is in any doubt about whether particular criteria or conditions are indirectly discriminatory or justifiable, then please speak to the SPS Chair or Vice Chair.

Recruitment

- 5.3. 'Managers' involved in recruitment must:
- specify only recruitment criteria that are relevant to the role, reflect genuine operational needs and are proportionate. More than one person should be involved in shortlisting of applicants wherever practicable;
 - ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse audience and try to avoid informal recruitment methods that exclude fair competition. In very rare cases, it may be legitimate and necessary to restrict recruitment to a particular role to certain groups, but it is essential that this is discussed with the SPS Chair and/or Vice Chair so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure legality;
 - review job advertisements carefully to ensure that stereotyping is avoided and that particular groups are not unjustifiably discouraged from applying;
 - not ask applicants about health or disability before an offer is made;
 - not ask candidates about any Protected Characteristic if the question may demonstrate an intention to discriminate. (For example, candidates should not be asked about current or future pregnancy, childcare or related matters); and
 - not make assumptions about immigration status based on appearance, accent, or apparent nationality;
 - As far as reasonably practicable, a written record of any reasons for relevant decisions will be kept.
- 5.4. SPS is legally required to verify that all employees have the right to work in the UK. Prior to starting employment, all employees must produce original documents to the employer's satisfaction, irrespective of nationality. Information about the documents required is available from the SPS Chair or Vice Chair.

Staff / volunteer training and development

- 5.5. Training needs may be identified during the normal appraisal process. Appropriate training to facilitate progression, where relevant, will be accessible to all staff and volunteers.
- 5.6. All decisions will be made based on merit and according to proportionate criteria determined by legitimate operational and organisational needs.

Conditions of service

- 5.7. Access to benefits and facilities and terms of employment will be kept under review to ensure that they are appropriately structured and that no unlawful barriers to qualification or access exist.

Discipline and termination of employment

- 5.8. Any redundancy selection criteria and procedures that are used, or other decisions taken to terminate employment, will be fair and not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- 5.9. Disciplinary procedures and penalties will be applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal, or other disciplinary action.
- 5.10. Part-time and fixed-term staff will be treated the same as full-time or permanent staff of the same position and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (pro-rata, where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

6. What to do if you encounter discrimination

- 6.1. If you believe that you have been the victim of discrimination, you should address your grievance to the SPS Chair or Vice Chair.
- 6.2. Every member of staff and volunteer has a responsibility to combat discrimination if they encounter it. Individuals who observe or are aware of acts that they believe amount to discrimination directed at others are encouraged to report these to the SPS Chair or Vice Chair.
- 6.3. Any grievance or report raised about discrimination will be kept confidential as far as this is practicable. We may ask you if you wish your complaint(s) to be put to the alleged discriminator if disciplinary action appears to be appropriate. It sometimes may be necessary (legally) to disclose the complaint or take action even if this is not in line with your wishes, but we will seek to protect you from victimisation and, if you wish, we will seek to protect your identity. You should be aware that disciplinary action may be impossible without your co-operation or if you refuse to allow relevant information to be disclosed.
- 6.4. Staff who raise a complaint about or report discrimination in good faith will be protected from retaliation or victimisation. So long as you act in good faith, the fact that you have raised a complaint or report will not affect your position within SPS, even if the complaint is not upheld. Making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith is a misconduct offence and will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary policies. Any member of staff or volunteer who attempts acts of retaliation or victimisation may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.
- 6.5. If you make a complaint, it may be necessary to ask you to stay at home (on paid leave if relevant) while investigations are being conducted and the matter is being dealt with through the appropriate procedures. This may particularly be necessary in cases of alleged harassment. [For further details please see the SPS Complaints Policy.]

7. Non-compliance with the equal opportunities policy

- 7.1. Any breach of equal opportunities or failure to comply with this policy will be taken very seriously and is likely to result in disciplinary action against the offender, up to and including immediate dismissal, where relevant.
- 7.2. Staff and volunteers should also note that:
 - in some cases, they may be personally liable for their acts of discrimination and that legal action may be taken against them directly by the victim of any discrimination; and
 - it may be a criminal offence intentionally to harass another employee.

8. Review of this policy

- 8.1. The SPS Trustees will keep this policy under review.
- 8.2. The SPS Trustees encourage staff and volunteers to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved or ask any questions if they are unsure about any part of this policy or how it is applied, by contacting the SPS Chair.

Date: 6th September 2023
2026

Review Date: September

Signature: *Mark Howard Shaw*
SPS Chair on behalf of SPS Executive and Council

Printed Name: Mark H Shaw

Appendix

Equality Act 2010 - Types of discrimination (the 'protected characteristics')

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- disability
- gender / gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are termed 'protected characteristics'.