

St Peter's Church, Chester
Disability inclusion Statement

We are made in the image of God, and as such all people are of equal importance and significance. In God there is no distinction between “male and female, Greek or Jew, slave or free” – disabled or able. We all, irrespective of our status have privileges and responsibilities in the practice and outworking of our faith. Just as there is a ‘bias to the poor’ so there is a Biblical imperative to have a corporate responsibility to those on the margins of society and within the structures of our church. This policy enshrines the principle that all people are treated equally.

Definition of disability

In the Equality Act 2010 a disability means a physical or mental condition (or other impairment) which has a long substantial and long-term impact on your ability to do normal day to day activities.

How the Equality Act affects ‘service-providers’ and Employers.

The Equality Act states that service providers and employees should take reasonable steps to ensure that their policies, practices and procedures enable people with disabilities to make full use of anything they offer to the public, or to work comfortably within the environment. If your practice makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a person with disabilities to work, or to use your services, you may be in breach of the Act unless you take steps to change. These are known as ‘reasonable adjustments’.

The Purpose of this policy

- To support the church in changing lives by changing attitudes towards disability access and inclusion through its policies and practice.
- To support informed advocacy of inclusive attitudes when speaking in public situations, and in written communications.
- To support the church in its awareness as an employer and as a service provider to create accessibility for all.
- To support good practice for churches as an institution in their role as providers for visitors, tourists, worshippers and pilgrims, in these places of cultural and religious heritage.
- To support good practice for the church as an employer of both paid and voluntary workers, as required, in law.

Implementation

To ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities we will aspire towards the following good practice:

- A positive attitude to include all people as equals and so enable their full and equal participation, where possible, in both sharing in and leading worship is at the heart of the Gospel.
- Where possible all should be able to access the building independently.
- Where possible people should be able to sit and chairs with and without arms be available.

- Where possible there should be free movement around the building for someone to independently use a wheelchair or other aids to assist their movement.
- Where possible steps and obstructions should be removed. Full participation in all aspects of worship is central to the experience of the worshipper.
- Gathering for Communion at the altar is the heart of Christian worship. Therefore where possible communion should be fully accessible in the way it is for the able bodied.
- Singing in the music group, communion assistants, reading lessons, leading intercessions, are all part of worship and where appropriate should be accessible to all.
- A loop system should be available and used.
- Items displayed on the screen should be produced in line with Torch trust guidelines. Large print Communion service liturgy should be available.
- PCC meetings and all committee meetings should be held in accessible locations.
- Relevant church activities, socials, prayer groups, bible studies and courses should be held in accessible locations.

The Language we use

It is important to use language that does not reinforce negative images, incorrect assumptions and stereotypes associated with people with disabilities. All language is constantly evolving and the simplest way to make sure you are using appropriate language is to ask people with disabilities themselves.