



2025

# THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

### Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) – Equality and Ethical Commitment Statement

The Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) is committed to upholding the Islamic principles of excellence, justice, fairness, and the equality of all human beings as creations of God. We strive to treat every individual with dignity and respect, recognizing each person as one of God's finest creations.

In line with these core values and in full compliance with British law, COMS is dedicated to providing fair, equal, and equitable opportunities—both as an employer and a provider of services. These opportunities are extended without discrimination, subject only to genuine occupational requirements.

## SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all areas of the Central Oxford Mosque Society's (COMS) work, including service provision, employment, and volunteering.

COMS is committed to complying with the Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals against discrimination based on the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Where a role or service requires a person to possess a particular protected characteristic, COMS will ensure that such a requirement qualifies as a **genuine occupational requirement (GOR)**. Any GOR must be:

- Essential to the nature of the job or service,
- Proportionate, and
- A means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The law permits limited and specific exemptions where certain forms of discrimination are lawful due to the nature of the role or the organisation's ethos. Examples include:

- A Roman Catholic school restricting pupil admissions to Catholics.
- A health centre for Muslim women employing only female staff to maintain cultural and religious sensitivities.
- A mosque restricting applications for the position of imam to Muslims only.

COMS will always ensure that any such exemptions are applied appropriately, responsibly, and in accordance with the law.

## **POLICY STATEMENTS**

1. It is the policy of Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) to ensure that no job applicant or employee is unlawfully discriminated against, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable. The organisation is committed not only to meeting its legal obligations but also to the positively promoting equality, fairness, justice, respect and tolerance in all aspects of employment and service provision.
2. It is in our best interest and in the best interest of the employees if we together apply the Equal Opportunities Policy and other relevant employment policies and practices wholeheartedly. It is of great benefit to the Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) if it has a diverse workforce with different backgrounds, employed on ability alone.
3. Every applicant for a job, or every employee, shall be given equal opportunity whatever his or her personal status, except in a matter of
  - 3.1. Religious belief in cases where the occupation (such as an imam) clearly requires Islamic faith;
  - 3.2. Offending background, in cases where the criminal record history relates to the requirements of the post (such as, a teacher, youth worker or imam).
4. Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) will make sure that all its trustees/Committee Members, employees and volunteers know and understand this policy fully.
5. Recruitment literature will not imply a preference for one group of applicants unless there is a genuine occupational qualification that limits the post to this particular group, in which case this will be clearly stated.
6. All descriptions and specifications for posts will include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.
7. All selection will be thorough, conducted against defined criteria and will deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job. Where it is necessary to ask questions relating to personal circumstances, these will be related purely to job requirements and asked to all candidates.

8. Any disabled employees will have the same rights as other workers. Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) will make 'reasonable adjustments' to help disabled employees and job-applicants with:
  - 8.1. application forms, e.g. providing forms in Braille, audio formats;
  - 8.2. interview arrangements, e.g. wheelchair access, communicator support;
  - 8.3. aptitude tests, e.g. giving extra time to complete the tests;
  - 8.4. discipline and grievances;
  - 8.5. dismissal or redundancy;
  - 8.6. terms of employment, including pay;
  - 8.7. making sure the workplace has the right facilities and equipment for disabled workers;
  - 8.8. promotion, transfer and training opportunities; and
  - 8.9. work-related benefits like access to recreation or refreshment facilities.
9. Appropriate training will be provided to enable employees to perform their jobs effectively. Encouragement is given to all employees to take advantage of opportunities for training.
10. Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) emphasises that discrimination is an unacceptable conduct that may lead to disciplinary action under its Disciplinary Procedure.
11. Any employee/volunteer can make complaints of discrimination through the Grievance Procedure.

## Appendix 1: Definitions

- i. **'Personal Status'** refers to sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religious belief or offending background.
- ii. **'Discrimination'** is where a person is treated less favourably than another not on the merits of the case but on grounds of 'personal status'.
- iii. **'Indirect Discrimination'** means discrimination by the imposition of requirements which, although equally applicable to all possible applicants, may nevertheless be discriminatory because:
  - a. The number of persons of the same personal status who can comply with the requirement is considerably smaller than the number who cannot; and
  - b. The requirement cannot be shown to be justifiable.

## Appendix 2: Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

To see how effective our policies and procedures are and how well we meet our legal requirements, we ask all applicants to complete this form. Your information will be kept **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** and will be used only for equality and diversity monitoring. If you are selected, the information will become part of your confidential personnel file to enable the Central Oxford Mosque Society (COMS) to meet its monitoring needs only; it will not be used in relation to any promotion or training opportunity or for any other purpose.

**Application for the post of:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Ref:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of application:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **First name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy) **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Sex:</b> Female/Male/Other				
<b>Ethnic Origin:</b>				
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH	BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH	CHINESE OR OTHER	MIXED	WHITE
Bangladeshi	African	Arab	White and Black Caribbean	British
Indian	Caribbean	Chinese	White and Black African	Irish
Pakistani	African and Caribbean	Any other ethnic origin	White and Asian	Scottish
Any other Asian background	Any other Black background	Prefer not to say	Any other mixed background	Any other white background