

Religion and Belief in the Workplace

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Policy Statement

Summary

West Yorkshire Police are committed to providing a vibrant, ethical and sustainable working and learning environment that values equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. We commit to maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment, taking each instance seriously. This includes any harassment or targeted treatment because of a person's religion or belief.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote equality, value diversity, ensure fairness, justice and equality of access and opportunity for all, regardless of religion and belief; and
- Outline the specific processes and considerations based on an individual's religion or belief.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the supporting information.

Scope

This policy applies to all within the workplace including police officers, police staff, special constables, apprentices, volunteers, agency workers, contractors, embedded partners and all West Yorkshire lead regional collaborations.

Responsibilities

Line managers

Where an individual discloses their religion or belief, line managers must:

- Ensure they are aware about the different cultural and religious needs of all their staff. This may be through discussion at induction, PDR or regular one-to-ones;
 - Fully consider and, wherever possible, be accommodating of requests to observe faith and customs;
 - Where requests cannot be accommodated, clearly communicate the reasons as to why this is the case;
 - Be mindful that some requests may be of a sensitive nature. Advice should be sought from the most appropriate support function, e.g. the DEI team, Staff Networks, Trade Unions, Police Federation or Employee Relations; and
 - Deal promptly and effectively with cases where discrimination, bullying and harassment is alleged to have occurred, in line with the Equality, Inclusion and Respect in the Workplace policy.
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Individuals	<p>It is not compulsory for an individual to share their religion or belief. However, where an individual is prepared to share this, they must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider making their manager aware of their particular needs relating to their religion or belief;• Discuss these needs with their line manager, adopting a flexible approach to meeting these in line with the needs of the service where possible; and• Ensure that any requests are submitted giving reasonable notice and in line with the relevant process.
Other supporting functions	<p>The DEI team, Staff Networks, Trade Unions (members only), Police Federation and Employee Relations must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advise on best practice across the Force for matters relating to religion and belief;• Provide advice and guidance to line managers on the correct implementation of this policy and associated guidance; and• Provide advice as to the legal aspects, consulting with specialist associations where necessary.

Health and Safety

Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the duties of an employee conflict with their religious needs and have the potential to cause a health and safety risk (e.g. fasting), the individual may wish to ask their line manager for consideration to re-arrange their duties wherever possible. In such instances, individuals must discuss this with their line manager and, where agreed, shift changes may be made to allow working hours and breaks to coincide with the fasting period.• For any request, line managers must respond fairly and responsibly, and consider:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The needs of the individual;○ The needs of their colleagues; and○ Operational requirements.• The organisation may be justified in refusing such a request if it conflicts with legitimate business needs which they are unable to meet in any other way. This must be clearly communicated with the individual. If the organisation is unable to justify a refusal, this may be discrimination.
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Flexibility in Working Hours

Principles

- The Force must consider, and accommodate insofar as is reasonably practicable, requests for flexibility in order to allow religious observance or attendance at religious events or festivals. This might include:
 - Re-arranging duties, shifts or rest days, e.g. annual leave, flexi leave or a change of rota; or
 - Reducing lunch periods to accommodate changes in starting or finishing times (e.g. during periods of fasting). Note: Rest breaks must meet requirements of the Working Time Regulations; or
 - Reduction to part time or compressed hours.
 - Individuals must submit such a request giving reasonable notice in order for it to be properly considered.
 - The Force must ensure all actions are lawful and result in equal treatment of a person or group regardless of religion.
 - There may be occasions when it is appropriate for an individual to attend a religious event as part of their policing role. This will be determined in response to local and community policing needs.
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Holy Days

- Where an individual wishes to observe a religious sacred day/Sabbath, and where they would normally be required to work on those days (e.g. Sundays for Christians, Fridays after dusk until dusk on Saturday for Judaism, Fridays for Muslims), they may request a flexible working arrangement to facilitate this. See relevant policies for police officers and police staff.
 - Where the individual works shifts and a shift falls on a Holy Day, it may be possible to swap with a colleague. Individuals must consult their line manager in the first instance.
 - Managers must consider the needs of their staff when organising duty rosters for shift workers during times of religious celebrations. Individuals must make their managers aware of their needs in good time to ensure they are taken into account.
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Prayer/Wellbeing Rooms

Principles

- Some religions or beliefs require their followers to pray or meditate at specific times during the day. Therefore, individuals may request access to an appropriate prayer or wellbeing room with appropriate ablution facilities.
- Fair consideration must be given to access the prayer and wellbeing rooms within working hours. All requests must be balanced against operational/departmental need. Reasonable justification must be provided to all requests that are denied. If the organisation is unable to justify a refusal, this may be discrimination.

- The Force must agree to this request where:
 - A quiet place is available;
 - It is feasible to allow its use for prayer;
 - This does not have an adverse impact on other staff or the Force; and
 - Operational requirements permit.
 - The Force is not required to enter into significant expenditure and/or building alterations to meet religious needs. However, the Force will provide prayer spaces and/or wellbeing rooms, as well as ablution facilities, where reasonably practicable. Where possible, wellbeing and prayer rooms will be separate.
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Additional Considerations

Principles

- See supporting information for additional considerations.
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Additional Information

Compliance

This policy complies with the following legislation, policy and guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Dress and Personal Appearance policy
 - Flexible Working Arrangements – Police Staff policy
 - Flexible Working Arrangements – Police Officers policy
 - Leave and Hours of Duty – Police Officers policy
 - Terms and Conditions
 - Unpaid and Purchasing Additional Leave policy
 - Special Leave policy
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