

Guidance

G1375

Religious Observance guidelines

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this Guidance is to support Transport for London's Equality and Inclusion Policy. They have been produced to brief managers on dealing with the needs of employees with certain religious observances in relation to employment and workplace requirements. These guidelines outline the principles of compliance with our Equality and Inclusion policy which reflects TfL's statutory obligations.

2 Scope

This Guidance applies to all of employees of TfL, Docklands Light Railway Limited, Rail for London Limited, London Bus Services Limited, London Buses Limited, Victoria Coach Station Limited who are on TfL employment contracts (Pay bands 1-5 and Directors) and those staff on predecessor organisations employment contracts where the individual has transferred to the employment of TfL.

3 Background

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against workers because of their religious beliefs.

TfL's Bullying and Harassment policy states that no employee or potential employee should endure unfair discrimination or be subjected to harassment because of their religion or belief.

Consequently, managers should make every effort to accommodate individual requests, whilst bearing in mind the overall business needs and requirements. In some cases local arrangements could be made, with the agreement and flexibility of both managers and colleagues who may be required to cover or change their shifts, in order to achieve a situation acceptable to all. Where requests for time off to observe religious practices cannot be accommodated, TfL must be able to demonstrate that all possible and reasonable avenues towards granting the request have been thoroughly considered.

3.1 Definitions

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It should be serious, genuinely and sincerely held, and worthy of respect in a democratic society. It should also be compatible with human dignity and should not conflict with the fundamental rights of others. The law protects adherents to all the generally recognised religions, as well as druids and pagans, for example. It also protects people without any religion or belief, including humanists and atheists, who have a profound belief or clear belief system affecting the way they view the world.

Direct discrimination means that staff or job applicants must not be treated less favourably than others because they follow, are perceived to follow, or do not follow a particular religion or belief. For example, it is unlawful not to employ someone, dismiss them, refuse to provide them with training or deny them promotion because they follow or do not follow a particular religion or belief.