

Masorti Judaism policy on equality, inclusion and diversity

Adopted by the board of trustees, March 2017; revisions agreed by HR committee March 2018

A. Purpose of policy and guiding values

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Masorti Judaism operates in line with the values of equality and human dignity, maximising inclusion and respecting the diversity of its employees, trustees, volunteers and programme participants.
2. The policy is guided by the principle that all human beings are created in the image of God and, being of infinite value, deserve dignity, respect and equal treatment, as articulated in the Mishnah:

לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי ללמדך שכל המאבד נפש אחת מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא וכל המקיים נפש אחת מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא. ומפני שלום הבריות שלא יאמר אדם לחבירו 'אבא גדול מאביך'. ושלא יהו מינין אומרים 'הרבה רשויות בשמים'. ולהגיד גדולתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שאדם טובע כמה מטבעות בחותם אחד וכולן דומין זה לזה ומלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא טבע כל אדם בחותמו של אדם הראשון ואין אחד מהן דומה לחבירו. לפיכך כל אחד ואחד חייב לומר בשבילי נברא העולם. [סנהדרין פרק ד משנה ה.]

For this reason humans were created singly, to teach you that whoever destroys a single soul, Scripture accounts it as if he had destroyed an entire world; and whoever saves one soul, Scripture accounts it as if she had saved an entire world. And for the sake of peace among people, that one should not say to his or her fellow, 'My parent is greater than yours;' and that heretics should not say, 'There are many powers in Heaven.' And to declare the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be God, for when a person stamps out many coins with one die, they are all alike, but the King, the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be God, stamped each person with the seal of the first human being, and not one of them is like his or her fellow. Therefore each and every one is obliged to say, 'For my sake the world was created.' [Sanhedrin 4:5. Edited for gender neutrality.]

3. The policy is also designed to conform with the principles of equality as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation and specifically to prevent discrimination on grounds of legally protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

B. Discrimination in the workplace

4. Discrimination in the workplace in any form is unacceptable and in most cases unlawful. This includes direct discrimination, discrimination by association and perception, and indirect discrimination.
5. Masorti Judaism therefore aims to ensure that all employees, trustees and volunteers are treated fairly and without favour or prejudice. We aim to ensure that while at work or engaging in volunteer activity our employees, trustees and volunteers will not suffer harassment, bullying or any act or conduct which causes them to be alarmed or distressed. We are committed to applying this throughout all areas of employment and volunteer work: recruitment and selection, training, development, benefits, rewards, promotion, grievances and disciplinary procedures.
6. Every employee, trustee and volunteer is a stakeholder in the success of this policy and is expected to make a positive contribution towards creating an environment of inclusion and equal opportunity throughout the organisation.

In particular, employees, trustees and volunteers

- must not take discriminatory actions or decisions which are contrary to the spirit of this policy,
 - must not harass, abuse or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristics or for any other reason,
 - will report any discriminatory behaviour or practices, and
 - will co-operate with any measures introduced to develop or monitor diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity.
7. Masorti Judaism will not tolerate sexual harassment of any kind, will work to ensure that employees, trustees and volunteers do not suffer this or any other kind of harassment, and encourages any employee who has experienced or witnessed harassment to report this in line with our grievance and disciplinary policy.
 8. All employees, trustees and volunteers engaged for a significant period will be offered training on equality, diversity and inclusion on an annual basis.
 9. Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups. In particular, we will seek to enable flexible working, to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate people with disabilities, and to provide adequate additional pay for parental leave.
 10. Our grievance procedure is available to any individual who believes that they have been discriminated against and we recommend such individuals to pursue the matter through this channel.

C. Recruitment – staff, trustees and volunteers

11. All vacancies for staff, trustees or volunteers will be advertised simultaneously internally, across all Masorti communities and, where relevant, externally. Steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches underrepresented groups internally and externally.
12. All vacancy advertisements for staff, trustees or volunteers will include access to a clear job description and person specification and an appropriate short statement on equal opportunity. Selection criteria (job description and employee specification) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the role.
13. For staff appointments, wherever possible, more than one person must be involved in the selection interview and recruitment process, and all should have received training in equal opportunities.
14. All trustee and officer elections and appointments will be run according to a fair, transparent process, based on clear role description and person specifications, as determined by the board of trustees. We expect all constituent synagogues to appoint their trustees on the Masorti Judaism board in accordance with these principles.
15. In all cases, reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies must be recorded.

D. Programmes and events

16. Masorti Judaism events and programmes will be open to all, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
17. We will endeavour to make reasonable arrangements to remove barriers to entry, facilitate participation and meet the needs of people from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. Such arrangements will include, where possible, childcare facilities, access for people with physical disabilities, and well-advertised bursaries or discounted fees for people on lower incomes.
18. We will endeavour to ensure diversity among the presenters, trainers and speakers appearing at Masorti Judaism events. In particular, other than in exceptional circumstances, we will make every effort not to run all-male panels.
19. Notwithstanding the above, some Masorti Judaism events will be aimed at specific groups (for example women or children of particular ages), where this is justified educationally or in terms of the needs of the target group. In these cases, any restrictions on participation will be clearly advertised.

E. Expectations of member communities and provision of services

20. Masorti Judaism is the umbrella organisation for a network of independent member synagogues. While Masorti Judaism cannot take responsibility for the operations of these synagogues, we expect each member community to conform with the principles of equality, inclusion and diversity set out in this policy.
21. Any Masorti Judaism employee or trustee who becomes aware of allegations of discrimination or harassment within a member community will communicate this to the Chief Executive and Co-Chairs, who will refer this appropriately to the leadership of the community in question, require them to investigate, to take any appropriate actions and to report back to Masorti Judaism on the results. Masorti Judaism will offer professional support on managing discrimination or harassment to any community which needs it.
22. As a pluralistic movement, we respect and accommodate a wide range of religious practices. However, we require our member communities to adopt a fully egalitarian, non-discriminatory approach in regard to the educational and programmatic life of the synagogue and its management.
23. We recognise that many of our member communities rely on the exemptions for religious organisations provided for by the Equality Act 2010 to ensure their communal life conforms with their beliefs and principles, for example restricting synagogue membership to members of the Jewish faith, limiting religious leadership roles on the basis of gender, or requiring the employment of male-only clergy.
24. Where these requirements have an impact on the services Masorti Judaism provides to these communities, we will conform with any reasonable and lawful restrictions. For example, we will comply with a community's request to supply it with male-only candidates for temporary or permanent rabbinical or cantorial roles, where this accords with the religious practice of the community in question.