



**St Thomas' Church, Kilnhurst
Disability Inclusion Policy.**

Introduction

We are required in law to respond to the subject of disability both as a service provider and an employer. As such the Disability: Equality Act 2010 requires that our policies, practices and procedures enable people with disabilities to enjoy and fully participate in all aspects of church life.

St Thomas' Church recognizes that participation in all aspects of worship is important to all who are in Christ.

Definition of a disability

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. (Disability: Equality Act 2010)

In the Act, "Substantial" means more than minor or trivial; and "long term" means 12 months or more, except that certain conditions count as a disability from the moment of diagnosis.

Physical or mental impairments include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing), learning difficulties, and medical conditions.

The language we use

We will use language that does not reinforce negative images, incorrect assumptions, or stereotypes, that may be associated with people with disabilities. We will consult with our worshipping community on appropriate language where appropriate and where possible.

Accessibility symbols

We will use accessibility symbols to notify accessibility of places, written materials, and activities for persons with disabilities.

Our practice as a service provider

To ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in our worship we will develop the following good practice in the worshipping life of the church:

- To teach the clear understanding that all people are made in the image of God, and that God's love, held out in the gospel, is available freely to all.
- To enable the full and active participation of all people in the worship of God.
- To locate all church activities, socials, prayer groups, bible studies, courses and meetings, including PCC and other business meetings, in accessible places.
- To enable all people to access the church building independently, where possible.
- To enable free independent movement around the church building for all people, where possible, including for those who use a wheelchair or other aids to assist their movement.
- To work towards removing or mitigating any church building obstructions to free independent movement, where possible.
- To provide accessible seating in the church building for all people, including seats with and without arm rests, and by providing cushions where helpful.
- To bring the bread and wine of communion to the communicant, in their seating in the church building, if permanent obstructions to their individual free movement do not permit their access to the communion rail.
- To provide a hearing loop system in the church nave, at all times (to be reviewed and reinstated as possible)
- To provide large print bibles, service booklets, hymn books, and handouts as needed.
- To maintain and review annually an accessibility audit for the church building.

Our practice as an employer

We will follow our statutory obligations, and we will undertake to develop and maintain the following good practice as an employer:

- To keep abreast of best practice for equal opportunities employment.
- To maintain a clear written equal opportunities policy with access issues incorporated.
- To fulfil our equal opportunities responsibilities across all posts, lay, ordained, paid and voluntary.

Reverend Matthew Lawes, Vicar (Interim)

Dr Simon Langmead, Church Warden

Mr Paul Bulman, Church Warden

Date: