

Institute of Equality & Diversity Practitioners

2 Old College Court,
29 Priory Street,
Ware,
Hertfordshire
SG12 0DE
Tel: 0844 482 7263
Fax: 0845 612 2061
Email: info@iedp.org.uk
Web: www.iedp.org.uk

TO Equality and Human Rights Commission

Re: Occupational requirements

I have been approached by the Salvation Army to advise them on the issue of Occupational Requirements. They are concerned that last October they were sent a questionnaire by the Commission following a complaint by a member of the public that a post they advertised stated that they wished the successful candidate to be a practising Christian. As a result of the questionnaire they withdrew the advert.

They have now approached me on the principles involved and I have offered my services to them since it seems a significant point that needs clarification. Only a limited number of posts have been designated in this way. The Salvation Army does not require all of its employees to be practising Christians but it has judged that some managerial posts will need an understanding of the theological context which motivates and underpins the whole of Salvation Army activity and how it relates to the delivery of functions within different roles in order to support managers below them with ethical and policy issues relating to the Salvation Army ethos and practice.

I have proposed that they review each of the posts which they considered faith to be relevant occupational requirement and to undertake an equality impact assessment on the review so that evidence can be demonstrated of whatever conclusion are drawn.

It would assist me to know whether the Commission has taken a view of ORs regarding Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu Schools and organisations? And whether a view has been taken in respect of Church of England and Catholic Schools and organisation and which, if any posts are deemed suitable as ORs? I ask this because a perception might be drawn that some or all Christian organisations are being or may be treated less favourably than other faith organisations.

I am mindful of the somewhat vexatious claims made by the Christian Institute and can assure you that the Salvation Army is not associated with this kind of challenge, they simply wish to be clear about when and whether an Occupational Requirement can be applied to a particular role of job.

For my own part I would wish to be assured that all protected characteristics received appropriate and proportionate treatment.

Linda Bellos
OBE

Chair of IEDP