

One25 Christian Ethos paper

The purpose of this document is to explain our Christian origins, ethos and values. However, we wish to make clear at the outset that we welcome as part of One25, all who share our values and vision whatever their belief.

Vision Statement

“A community where all women are valued and able to live fulfilled lives without the risk of being trapped in sex work.”

Mission Statement

“One25 reaches out to women trapped in or vulnerable to street sex-work, supporting them to break free and build new lives away from violence, poverty and addiction”

Values

“Person Centred – including justice, unconditional love, non-judgemental, compassion, truth and a willingness to see things through – reflecting our Christian ethos in action.”

The organisation was **founded on Christian vision** and is **driven by Christian values**. We do not expect all staff and volunteers to subscribe to the Christian faith, but to understand and acknowledge the Christian values which are at the heart of One25. It is these values on which all our work is based.

Our mission is to help and promote the voice for any women who are selling sex on the streets of Bristol.

We aim:-

- a. to establish relationships with them based on trust and integrity. This is mainly through the work of the van and foot outreach.
- b. to supply them with a safe place to relax and have a meal. Also a place to have showers, do their laundry or access medical help, help with drug and alcohol issues, finance issues and housing advice. It also offers opportunities for the women to take part in creative / skill building activities. This is mainly through the Drop In centre and life skills work.

- c. to give one to one support by a staff case worker.
- d. to support those in trouble with the law by accompanying them to court or visiting them in prison.
- e. to help those who want to make changes in their lives, by listening to them, making contact with available services and accompanying them on the journey.
- f. to be a voice for the women with other organisations and the Government

Founded on Christian Vision

The beginnings of One25, in 1995, were humble. Four women with a concern for the women selling sex on the streets of Bristol met in the basement of 125, Cheltenham Road, to discuss the situation. This basement, loaned by Raphael Appelby, a Catholic Priest, was the first home of the One25. They recognised that the sex workers had little help and were often without hope that their lives could change.

At that stage however there was no money and not much contact with the sex workers. Due to the faith, vision and creative ideas of Val Jeal (MBE) and her co-workers, One25 grew from those small beginnings to become the registered Charity and important organisation that it is today.

At each step it has been the Churches who have enabled the growth to occur, from the gift of a Ford Transit van in 1996 from Cornerstone Ministries, to the use of premises, as an office at a peppercorn rent, by Bristol Christian Fellowship (BCF) also in 1996. Later we were able to use the whole of the building, again at a very low rent. The Grosvenor Centre became our home, with the Drop-in for the women, with facilities for relaxation or training, a place for hot food and drink or to do laundry or take showers; and with several offices and a medical room. Finally, in 2005 Bristol Christian Fellowship gifted us the building for which we are extremely grateful.

We have no denominational bias but welcome donations and regular gifts from Christian Churches and other Christian and non Christian organisations and individuals. This, along with access to substantial grants since we became a registered Charity, has enabled us to help hundreds of women over the years.

From the beginning, One 25 has had an ecumenical approach to Christianity and also embraced those of other faiths and no faith. We acknowledged our differences and the need to respect those differences in our approach when it comes to prayer and verbally sharing our personal experience of the life changing power of the Holy Spirit. Under no circumstances do we encourage an aggressive evangelical approach to the women and any sharing at a spiritual level must be initiated or requested by the women themselves.

Driven by Christian values.

What do we mean by Christian values? From its early beginnings the Church and later many Christian organisations have tried to reflect Jesus' concern for the poor and marginalised. Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God which he saw as God's activity in the world and as

Christians we seek to emulate the values that Christ demonstrated. The vision Christ offers is of a re-ordered world which prioritises the position of the poor and those on the edge of society; ie **Justice**. It is this theology which is the basis of our thinking and actions as an organisation.

Love is the currency of the Kingdom of God, which characterised all of Jesus' actions and should be the underlying motive in all we do and in all our involvement with the women. God is not interested in 'do gooders' or in people seeking to build up merit by helping others. Rather, he is concerned for **justice** in the world. We therefore acknowledge that in all our relationships with the women we must offer non judgemental, unconditional love to them. In addition, our motivation must always be God's desire to give the women a sense of their own worth and that they have value as individuals both to God and to us.

Compassion and truth are other values which we seek to demonstrate and also a **willingness to go the second mile**. The Kingdom message is counter cultural, radical and anti hierarchical, reversing the position of those on the margins of or those excluded from society. Far from being impartial Jesus' revelation is that God does have a distinct bias to the poor and those at the bottom of the pile.

We acknowledge that these values of **Love, Justice, Compassion, Truth and a willingness to see things through**, are not exclusively Christian values, although in the case of One 25 they are seen as values demonstrated by Christ which Christians see as the one who offers ultimate healing and the chance of a new lifestyle to us all. Therefore we recruit and are glad to embrace those of other faiths or no faith, provided they are willing to practise these values and understand that One 25 is a Christian organisation founded on Christian vision and driven by Christian values.

What are the implications of the Christian vision and values for our organisation?

Implications for staff

1. The policies and practices of One25, which is a charitable organisation, are an active expression of the Christian Faith and its values. Therefore it is necessary that every staff member shall:
 - a. thoughtfully and conscientiously respect its Christian vision and values.
 - b. recognise that One25 sees its work as an active expression of the Christian Faith and its values.
 - c. whatever their own faith position and cultural background, work with the organisation in pursuing its values through its work.
2. The Trustees of One25 state that 'The CEO must be able to promote and demonstrate an active Christian faith.'
3. We are not seeking to recruit only Christians. We wish to encourage applications from all those who share our goals and can bring diversity and richness to our organisation, whatever their own faith position or cultural background.

4. However, candidates who express views, or engage in action detrimental to the work and vision of One25, would not satisfy the criteria of 1 and 3 above.

Implications for Senior Managers

The organisation looks for managers who will give leadership in the process of:

1. Encouraging One25 staff and volunteers to respect the Christian basis and its values.
2. Ensuring that any project or team working in their own field of responsibility, implement the values of the organisation.
3. Enabling staff and volunteers of different faith positions and cultural backgrounds to work with One25 in pursuing its values.
4. Ensuring that staff or volunteers who wish to, have opportunities to take part in worship and prayer.

Implications for Volunteers

One25's work relies heavily on the very large group of volunteers who help in so many ways. It is therefore very important that the implications for volunteers are the same as those quoted above for the staff of One25. In this way the Christian basis and values remain central within the organisation as a whole.

Implications for recruitment

1. General
All appointees are expected to meet the criteria of respecting and recognising the Christian nature of the organisation and of working according to its values as set out above.
2. Information for applicants
It is essential that every applicant, whether for a staff post, or to be a volunteer in One25, receives information on the organisation's Christian basis and its mission and values.

Interviewing

The Christian faith and values of the organisation must be included in every interview in order to check that the candidate has understood what the Christian basis and values of One25 really mean. The candidate must be given an opportunity of speaking to, and expanding upon, her attitude towards and recognition of, the organisation's Christian basis and values. However, decisions must never be made on the basis of faith position alone.

Reviewed By	Gill Nowland, Chief Executive Officer
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