



Lancashire FA Equality Policy

Foreword

Lancashire FA’s vision of ‘A Game for Everyone’ puts Equality at the heart of everything we do. We know the impact that football can have on communities, and how essential it is that we harness this in order to provide positive impacts that bring people together – something that has never been more critical than at the present time.

We have developed our Equality Policy to outline our commitment to Equality, and as part of our work with our clubs and leagues, committee members, coaches, volunteers and referees to ensure football for Lancashire’s community is a high-quality experience that is offered to all equally so that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the game and participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities.

Specifically, Lancashire FA strives to ensure everyone in our football community is treated equally well. Lancashire FA has a zero tolerance approach to anyone being treated less favourably or discriminated against on the grounds of sex, age, disability, ethnicity (including nationality and race), gender-reassignment, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership status, which are collectively known as ‘Protected Characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2010.

Roger Haydock - Lancashire FA Chair

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Policy Statement

Lancashire FA endorses the principle of Sports Equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in football, whether as a casual participant, team member, volunteer, coach, referee, committee member in a league or club, parent/carer or spectator or within Lancashire FA:

- Has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, ethnic origin, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.
- Can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected and, in particular, that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal Obligations

Lancashire FA is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind in football and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment. See *'Appendix 1 - Relevant Legislation and Forms of Unacceptable Discrimination'* for details of unacceptable behaviours.

Positive Action

The principle of Sports Equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It entails taking positive steps to counteract the effects of physical or cultural barriers – whether real or perceived – that restrict the opportunity for all sections of the community to participate equally and fully.

Lancashire FA will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to football and participation in associated activities by people from any group that is under-represented in the sport or has difficulty accessing it.

Responsibility

The Lancashire FA Board are accountable for setting the overall Equality Policy, and the Board, CEO and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented within Lancashire FA.

Policy Implementation

The following activities will be completed to ensure adherence to this policy and promotion of Sports Equality in football:

- An Executive Summary of this document will be published on the [Lancashire FA Website](#).
- This policy will be taken into consideration by the Board as part of their decision-making process and when determining the strategic direction of Lancashire FA. Equality, within the topic of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, will be included as an Agenda item in every Lancashire FA full Board and Committee meeting, Football Advisory Board meeting, Senior Leadership Team meeting, Full staff meeting and Departmental meetings.



- Lancashire FA will collaborate fully with any surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in football and will take into account the findings in order to develop measures to promote and enhance Sports Equality in football, whilst striving to increase participation within under-represented groups.
- Lancashire FA's Board and all staff will conduct mandatory Equality Training to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities, understanding about these subjects, and to ensure that Equality is recognised as a high priority within Lancashire FA. All Lancashire FA accredited and licensed coaches and footballing stakeholders will be encouraged to complete Equality and Diversity training as part of their ongoing CPD and association with Lancashire FA.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Board annually, or sooner if required as a response to legislative changes.

On an annual basis The Board will review all Lancashire FA measures, activities and initiatives initiated, promoted or taken part in to advance the aims of the policy and promote and enhance Sports Equality in Football, and the Chairman will report formally on these activities at the AGM.

Internal Complaints Procedure

Lancashire FA regards all forms of discriminatory behaviour including, but not limited to, the behaviour described in Appendix 1, as unacceptable, and strives to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievances or complaints related to such behaviour without fear of repercussions or penalisation.

Any member of staff who believes that they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy should follow the Lancashire FA Grievance Procedure as outlined within the Staff Handbook.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who violates the Lancashire FA Equality Policy.

External Complaints Procedure

In the event of a member of staff receiving a complaint from a person from within the footballing community, the complainant should be directed to the [complaint's section of our website](#), where they can read our Complaint's Procedure and submit a complaint using the relevant Lancashire FA complaint form, according to their circumstance:

- If the complainant believes that their complaint is in respect of discrimination on the grounds of one of the Protected Characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010, they should be directed to use this form: [Report a case of discrimination in respect of the Protected Characteristics](#).
- Use this form to report a general [complaint against a Match Official](#)
- Use this form to report a general [complaint against a Participant/Club](#)
- Use this form to report a general [complaint against Lancashire FA](#)



APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Relevant Legislation and Forms of Unacceptable Discrimination

Legal Rights

Discrimination has been legally defined through a series of legislative acts, including the Race Relations Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act 2006.

In April 2010, the Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent. The Equality Act 2010 is a new law which harmonises, where possible, and in some cases extends, protection from discrimination. It applies throughout the UK and came into force in October 2010.

Discrimination refers to unfavourable treatment on the basis of particular characteristics, which are known as the 'Protected Characteristics'. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Protected Characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on the grounds of' a Protected Characteristic. This means that individuals will be protected if they have a characteristic, are assumed to have it, associate with someone who has it or associate with someone who is assumed to have it (the exception to this is pregnancy and maternity, which does not include protection by association or assumption – a woman is only protected from discrimination on grounds of her own pregnancy).

Forms of Discrimination and Discriminatory Behaviour include the following:

- **Direct Discrimination** | This can be described as less favourable treatment on the grounds of one of the Protected Characteristics.
- **Indirect Discrimination** | This occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to an individual or group that would put persons of a particular characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons.
- **Discrimination Arising from a Disability** | When a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified, this is unlawful. This type of discrimination only relates to disability.
- **Harassment** | This is defined as unwanted conduct relating to a Protected Characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or which creates an intimidating or hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.
- **Victimisation** | It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because they have made allegations or brought proceedings under the anti-discrimination legislation, or because they have helped another person to do so. To do so would constitute victimisation.
- **Bullying** | Bullying is defined as a form of personal harassment involving the misuse of power, influence or position to persistently criticise, humiliate or undermine an individual.