



1. Purpose

The aim of Lincolnshire FA's Equality Policy is to promote its own objectives and in doing so, ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in football, whether as participants, team members, volunteers, coaches, referees, office-bearers or those within the County Football Association are able to, with fairness and respect. Lincolnshire FA will ensure that everybody:

- has an 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 or ethnicity or sexual orientation; and
- 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 football without the threat of discrimination*, intimidation, victimisation, harassment** or abuse.

All Lincolnshire FA representatives must accept and adhere to this policy and to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Lincolnshire FA is committed to promoting inclusion and confronting and eliminating discrimination in line with the aforementioned protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 and will set out and be held accountable for adopting the following procedures and practises.

2. Legal Obligations

Lincolnshire FA is committed to avoiding and eliminating discrimination of any kind in football and will, under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of harassment and abuse and is obligated to adhere to legal legislation. 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.

The Equality Act 2010 is a law which harmonises where possible and extends protection from discrimination. It applies throughout England and was implemented in October 2010.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination because 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 with someone who is perceived to have it.

3. Positive Action

The principle of equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It allows the Lincolnshire Football Association to take 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 in football and all related footballing activities should they chose to.

Lincolnshire 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.

* the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, on the grounds of the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010

** unwanted behaviour which you find offensive or which makes you feel intimidated or humiliated



Positive action is about taking specific steps to improve equality. One example of this might include, to increase the number of disabled people in senior roles within an organisation in which they are currently under-represented. To combat this the organisation might consider placing job adverts to target particular groups, to increase the number of applicants from that group.

Managers have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements. All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to the CEO.

4. Implementation

The following steps will be taken to publicise this policy and promote equality in football and related footballing activities:

- A copy of this document will be published on our website, across our social media platforms, via organisation newsletters, targeted club emails and across any other suitable platform that will provide significant exposure
- The Lincolnshire FA Chair will take overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is observed and implemented. The wider Board of Lincolnshire FA will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the County FA; this will include a Board Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Champion who will report to the Board on matters discussed and recommended by the Inclusion Advisory Group
- Lincolnshire FA will implement and monitor the use of an Inclusion Advisory Group who will reflect diversity within the county and meet formally a minimum of four times each year. Its role will be to support the County FA to deliver our Equality Action Plan and will check and challenge the work of the Association to ensure our policies and procedures are inclusive
- Lincolnshire 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 account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance equality for all involved in football
- Lincolnshire FA Board, staff and Council members will undertake equality training (a minimum of every 3 years) and keep up to date with equality legislation

Lincolnshire FA will encourage that upon affiliation, member clubs:

- formally adopt this policy, or produce their own equality and diversity policy in terms that are consistent with it
- take steps to ensure that their Committees, members, players, coaches and volunteers behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Club's constitution
- ensure that access to membership is open and inclusive
- support such measures and initiatives that Lincolnshire FA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy
- undertake any continuing professional development or courses that the organisation provides to improve equality and diversity practises across the County

It will be a condition of Lincolnshire FA affiliation that individuals associated and members:

- commit to act in accordance with this policy
- support such measures and initiatives that Lincolnshire FA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy



5. Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Inclusion Advisory Group supported by the Board Champion, will review the policy annually (or more regularly if necessary due to changes in legislation) and will report with recommendations to the Board. The Board, or where appropriate a designated Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Champion (who will be a Board member and representative of the Inclusion Advisory Group – *contact the CEO for information*), will review any measures or initiatives that Lincolnshire FA may institute or take part in to promote equality in football across the County and will report their findings back to the relevant individuals within the organisation.

6. Complaints and Compliance

Lincolnshire FA regards all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour as unacceptable and will ensure that individuals feel able to raise any grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, Board or Council member, player, coach, referee, volunteer, league or club who breaches the Lincolnshire FA Equality Policy. Any person who believes that he or she has been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by a member club, league, individual, staff, Board or Council member should follow the Lincolnshire FA's complaints procedure.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint should, including in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against Lincolnshire FA staff, Board or Council members, raise the matter by writing directly to the organisation Chief Executive Officer (*Nick Hanson, nick.hanson@lincolnshirefa.com*). This could be via email or in written correspondence to the office address (*Lincolnshire Football Association, Deepdale Enterprise Park, Deepdale Ln, Nettleham, Lincoln LN2 2LL*).

The Chief Executive Officer will investigate the complaint personally or appoint an appropriate person to do so. The investigation will be conducted impartially, confidentially, and without avoidable delay. Any person or organisation against whom a complaint has been made will be informed of what is alleged and given the opportunity to present their side of the matter.

Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amounts to a criminal offence, the Police or appropriate Authority will be informed. In the event that an individual, club or league associated with Lincolnshire FA is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, Lincolnshire FA will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking further action in relation to the matter concerned.

Lincolnshire FA thanks its members and representatives for their continued commitment to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into its day-to-day practises and keeping Lincolnshire a safe and enjoyable place to participate in football.

7. Policy Owner

This policy is owned and maintained by the Inclusion Advisory Group.

8. Policy Review Date

Date last reviewed: March 2021