



Liverpool County Football Association (LCFA)

Equality Policy

LCFA is fully committed to ensuring everyone can take part in football across the County in an enjoyable, friendly, safe and inclusive environment.

Across our Board and Committee structures, as well as our paid and volunteer workforce, LCFA believes that everyone should have the opportunity to be part of the football family and we are committed to creating a better football experience for the many, not the few. The foundations on which this is based are embedded in our values – Teamwork, Inclusivity, Passionate and Integrity.

Our Equality Policy below confirms a clear commitment to equality and that we will take firm action if required against anyone who behaves in a way that is discriminatory.

LCFA will not tolerate harassment, bullying, abuse or victimisation of a participant, which for the purposes of this Policy and the actions and sanction applicable, are regarded as discrimination, whether physical or verbal. LCFA will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs.

When we are made aware, LCFA is committed to the immediate investigation of any allegation of discrimination and where such is found to be the case, LCFA will require that the practice stops and impose sanctions as appropriate.

LCFA is committed to inclusion and anti-discrimination and raising awareness and educating of these issues. LCFA commits to investigating concerns and applying relevant and proportionate sanctions where and when appropriate. LCFA is committed to supporting campaigns, achieving independently verified equality standards, widening diversity and representation and promoting diverse role models. These are all seen as key elements of this Policy and its implementation.

LCFA also fully supports the Football Associations National Inclusion strategies referenced in the Appendix.

***Ian Wild, Chair
March 2022***

Policy Statement

LCFA endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in football, whether as participants, members, volunteers, coaches, referees, office-bearers or those within Liverpool County 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 reassignment, 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 intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal obligations

LCFA is committed to avoiding and eliminating inequalities and discrimination of any kind in football and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Appendix.

Positive action

The principle of equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It allows LCFA 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 should they chose to.

LCFA 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.

Implementation

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

- A copy of this document will be published on our website through our standalone EDI section.
- LCFA's CEO will take overall day to day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is observed.
- The Board of LCFA will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the County FA.
- LCFA 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.
- LCFA's Board, Committee members, paid and volunteer workforce will undertake equality training and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- It will be a condition of LCFA's annual affiliation that member clubs and leagues:
 - formally adopt this policy, or produce their own equality and diversity policy in terms that are consistent with it; and
 - 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; and
 - ensure that access to membership is open and inclusive
 - support such measures and initiatives that LCFA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.
- It will be a condition of LCFA's annual affiliation that individuals and members;
 - commit to act in accordance with this policy; and
 - support such measures and initiatives that LCFA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board will be accountable for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

The Board will review all Liverpool County FA activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy on an annual basis, and the Chair will report formally on this issue at the AGM.

The Board, or where appropriate a designated Equality Champion (who will be a Board member and/or representative of the Inclusion Advisory Group), will review any measures or initiatives that LCFA may institute or take part in to promote equality in football across the County and will report their findings formally to the AGM annually.

The Board, via the CEO, will review the policy annually (or more regularly due to changes in legislation) and will report with recommendations to the AGM.

Complaints and compliance

LCFA regards all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is concerned to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

If you have seen or heard discrimination in football, please email discipline@liverpoolfa.com or visit www.liverpoolfa.com and report the incident via the FA or Kick It Out online reporting forms <https://www.liverpoolfa.com/lcfa-equality>. Alternatively, you can use LCFA's Whistleblowing Policy.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, Board or Committee member, player, coach, referee or volunteer who breaches LCFA's Equality Policy.

Any person who believes that they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by a member club, league, individual, employee or Board member should follow LCFA's complaints procedure.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint should first address their complaint to that person, organisation, club or league. If you don't feel comfortable addressing your complaint with the person, organisation, club or league in the first instance, please email info@liverpoolfa.com. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against an LCFA employee or Director, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the Chair. All written correspondence should be sent to LCFA's Head Office and/or chairman@liverpoolfa.com.

Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amount to a criminal offence, the Police or appropriate Authority will be informed.

In the event that an individual, club or league associated with LCFA is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, LCFA will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking further action in relation to the matter concerned.

Liverpool County FA
March 2022

APPENDIX – 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 grounds of' a protected characteristic¹. 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 assumed to have it.

Forms of discrimination and discriminatory behaviour include the following:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination can be described as less favourable treatment on the grounds of one of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination 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 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

Harassment 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 he or she has 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.

Hate crime

The Police and the CPS have agreed the following definition for identifying and flagging hate crimes:

"Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity."

Interdependent Strategies

- The FA – 'Survive, Thrive, Revive' Strategy
- The FA – 'A Game for All' Strategy
- The FA – 'Inspiring Positive Change' Strategy
- The FA Football Leadership Diversity Code

¹ 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.