**NORTHUMBERLAND FA EQUALITY POLICY**

**FOREWORD**

Northumberland FA is responsible for setting the standards and values that apply throughout grassroots football in Northumberland. Football is for everyone; it belongs to and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it (*as per FA definition of ‘participant’ in appendix).*

The Northumberland FA Vision of ‘*using the power of football to inspire, unite and create opportunities for all*’ is an all-encompassing vision that demonstrates our commitment to equality and our passionate belief in inclusivity and diversity. The foundations on which this is based are embedded in our company values, which are;

* Accountable (Each of us is responsible for our words, our actions and our results).
* Professional (We maintain the highest standards, in everything we do and achieve, even when we fail).
* Respect (We value everyone and treat people with dignity).
* Teamwork (We achieve more when we collaborate and all work together).

At Northumberland FA, we are committed to displaying and demonstrating consistent behaviours and actions associated to our values, ultimately striving to ensure that we provide a safe, positive and welcoming football experience for every participant across the game in Northumberland.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect, along with ensuring that Northumberland FA is equally accessible to all. All participants should abide by and adhere to this Policy and to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This policy is fully supported and adhered to by the staff, the Executive Officer and the Board of Directors of Northumberland FA, who together, are all responsible for the impartial and consistent implementation of the policy.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

To reinforce Northumberland FA’s commitment towards equality, we have appointed a dedicated Head of Compliance and Inclusion who will work to ensure that the principles of this policy are embedded within our organisation and clearly displayed by all in our day-to-day operations.

We will actively seek to provide access and opportunities for all members of the football community to take part in. This will be underpinned by ensuring we seek to reduce the inequalities which result from socio-economic disadvantages.

When we are made aware, Northumberland FA is committed to the immediate investigation

of any allegation of discrimination, harassment, abuse, bullying or victimisation and where such is found to be the case, Northumberland FA will require that the practice stops immediately, along with imposing sanctions as appropriate. In addition to this, we will escalate any matters to the National FA as and when this is required. We are committed to inclusion and anti-discrimination and will actively seek to raise awareness of and educate on these issues, utilising all of our available channels.

Northumberland FA is committed to creating and supporting campaigns, widening diversity, promoting diverse role models and to achieving independently verified equality standards.

We will continue to monitor and measure progress towards creating a truly inclusive game for everyone within the grassroots game in Northumberland. We will seek to ensure that we create a culture and environment that will help us to be viewed as role models.

This policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum and more frequently if required.

**LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

Northumberland County FA’s commitment is to promote inclusion and to confront and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Under the Equality Act of 2010, the protected characteristics are as follows:

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| **CHARACTERISTIC** | **DEFINITION** |
| Age | A person belonging to a particular age or a range of ages |
| Gender reassignment | The process of transitioning from one sex to another |
| Being married or in a civil partnership | Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships recognised as ‘civil partnerships’. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the equality act). |
| Being pregnant or on maternity leave | Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. |
| Disability  | A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. |
| Race  | Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. |
| Religion or belief | Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. |
| Sex | A man or a woman. |
| Sexual orientation | Whether a person sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or both sexes.  |

*\*Definitions taken from ‘Equality and Human Rights Commission via equalityhumanrights.com*

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected by law from discrimination ‘on the grounds of’ having one or more of these characteristics, being assumed to have one or more, associating with someone who has one or more or being with someone who is assumed to have one or more.

Northumberland County FA will not tolerate any of the following groups of discrimination (please see appendix for further details):

* Direct discrimination
* Indirect discrimination
* Discrimination arising from disability
* Harassment
* Victimisation
* Bullying
* Perceptive discrimination
* Associative discrimination

*\*This list is not exhaustive and will be continually reviewed in line with any legislative changes*.

**COMPLAINTS & COMPLIANCE**

Northumberland FA regards all forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described and referenced above as unacceptable. We are determined to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so. We believe that every individual involved in football should feel safe and therefore, ensuring the safety of all is of paramount importance to all of us at Northumberland FA.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, Board or Council Member, District FA Member, participant or volunteer, who is found, after a full investigation, to have violated the Equality Policy. We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination. Northumberland FA will ensure that that any allegations are taken seriously and dealt with sympathetically and confidentially.

Any person who believes that they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy should, in the first instance, and if they feel able, raise their complaint with whoever is in a position of responsibility in that environment. In the external environment (i.e. Matchday) this includes, but is not limited to; The Referee, a Coach, a club official or a parent. In addition to this, we would strongly encourage that either the victim or witness of discrimination contact us using one of the following;

If you have seen or heard discrimination in football, please contact us via:

* Email:discipline@northumberlandfa.com or
* Visit: [www.northumberlandfa.com](http://www.northumberlandfa.com) and report the incident or
* Report directly to The FA: Football.ForAll@TheFA.com or
* Visit: [www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org) and report the incident using the online report form

**POSITIVE ACTION AND TRAINING**

Northumberland FA is committed to the ongoing training, development and education of all of our staff, board, councils and volunteers within the grassroots game. We are determined to advocate and promote an inclusive culture. Therefore, we have adopted the ‘ABC model of inclusion’ which is a best practice template that will allow us to continually develop our knowledge, skills and influence with regards to ensuring equality and anti-discrimination. The model accounts for the fact that individuals and organisations are often on their own ‘inclusion journey’ and may be at different stages. The principles of the model are as follows:

**Appreciate**: ***inclusion is the antecedent of change.***

Allyship begins with an individual’s awareness and appreciation of the issues and experiences of others. This stage is reflective of an individual’s growth in awareness. It may involve an initial step of accepting that equity in society is something worth striving for. Individuals in this phase are identifying the challenges to create an inclusive environment and becoming open to learn more about their need to act.

**Build**: ***an inclusive climate by behavioural change***

This stage moves on from an individual gaining awareness and being open to address the

challenges of inclusivity to directly building an inclusive environment. Individuals in this

phase are helping build an inclusive, fair and equitable climate by their actions. They are

proactively building relationships with others, gathering diverse perspectives, empathising,

actively listening and communicating transparently.

**Champion:** ***change by acting as a catalyst for others***

The last phase of allyship is one of advocacy. Individuals at this stage take their behavioural

commitment to another level. They tend to look for opportunities to affect change formally

and informally. To be successful at this stage, individuals need to be courageous, action oriented, composed and willing to commit.

**Signed**

**Chairman** **Steve Ord**  **Date XXXXXX**

**Executive Officer** **Andrew Rose-Cook**  **Date XXXXXX**

**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 (employment only until 2012), disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status (employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination ‘on 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 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.

*\*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.*

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 - 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.

DEFINITIONS:

***‘’Participant’’*** *means an Affiliated Association, Competition, Club, Club Official, Licensed Agent, Player, Official, Match Official, Management Committee Member, Member or Employee of an affiliated club and all such persons who are from time to time participating in any activity sanctioned either directly or indirectly by The Association.*