

Equality Policy

FOREWORD

Worcestershire Football Association is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and learners. Our aim is that our workforce and learners will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee and learner feels respected and able to give of their best.

To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment or participating in our training programmes and not to discriminate on grounds of sex, gender re-assignment, marital status, race (ethnicity, nationality) disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity or age. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees and learners, whether part-time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop to their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce/learners will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our commitment:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all staff and learners are recognised.
- Every employee and learner is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. For specific examples and details refer to the Association's separate Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff and learners.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense. All of the Association's practices and procedures will be reviewed at least once annually to ensure fairness. An action plan for improvements will be devised and monitored through the Self Assessment Process.
- Breaches of our Equality and Diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- The Association will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that each training placement and off-the-job training provider used, abides by current legislation with regard to equality of opportunity and, if it discovers any breach that is not immediately rectified, will cease to use that placement or provider.
- Where appropriate, positive measures will be taken to overcome under-representation in specific occupational areas.

Policy Statement

Worcestershire Football Association Limited endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in football, whether as casual participants, team members, volunteers, coaches, office-bearers in clubs or those within Worcestershire Football Association Limited :

- 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, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status; 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 their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal obligations

Worcestershire Football Association Limited 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. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Appendix.

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.

Worcestershire Football Association Limited 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.

Implementation

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

- A copy of this document will be published on the Worcestershire Football Association Limited Website.
- The Chairman of Worcestershire Football Association Limited will take overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy is observed.
- The Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of Worcestershire Football Association Limited.
- Worcestershire Football Association Limited 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 sports equality in football.
- Worcestershire Football Association Limited will provide access to training for all of its Executive Board Members to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities. All Worcestershire Football Association Limited accredited and licensed coaches will be equality and diversity trained.
- It will be a condition of Worcestershire Football Association Limited membership that member clubs:

- 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 Boards, members 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 Worcestershire Football Association Limited may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.
- It will be a condition of Worcestershire Football Association Limited membership that individual and corporate members
 - commit to act in accordance with this policy; and
 - support such measures and initiatives that Worcestershire Football Association Limited may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

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

The Board will review all Worcestershire Football Association Limited activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy on an annual basis, and the Chairman will report formally on this issue at the AGM.

The Board, or where appropriate a designated project leader, will review any measures or initiatives that Worcestershire Football Association Limited may institute or take part in to promote and enhance sports equality in Worcestershire Football Association Limited, and will report their findings formally to the AGM.

The Board will review the policy itself at intervals of no more than three years, (or when necessary due to changes in legislation) and will report with recommendations to the AGM.

Complaints and compliance

Worcestershire Football Association Limited 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.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, member or volunteer who violates the Worcestershire Football Association Limited Equality and Diversity 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, individual member or corporate member of Worcestershire Football Association Limited, should first complain to that person or organisation. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against Worcestershire Football Association Limited itself, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the Chairman. Contact details are available through the website: <https://www.worcestershirefa.com/about/board-and-staff>

The Chairman will investigate the complaint personally or appoint a Board member 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.

The outcome of the investigation will be notified to the parties in writing and reported to Worcestershire Football Association Limited Board. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of an individual member, corporate member, or member club the Board may impose sanctions on that person or organisation in line with Worcestershire Football Association Limited Constitution. Sanctions may

range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent expulsion from Worcestershire Football Association Limited membership. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the Executive Board will consider the severity of the matter and take account of any mitigating circumstances.

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

In the event that an individual or organisation associated with Worcestershire Football Association Limited is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, Worcestershire Football Association Limited Board will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action as above in relation to the matter concerned.

On behalf of

Worcestershire Football Association Limited

MAY 2021

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.

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.