



Equality and Diversity Policy

Version History

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FOREWORD

Sports Equality

Sports Equality is about fairness in sport; equality of access; recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It involves changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to all members of society and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy their sport, use their talents, and realise their full potential.

As club we have an obligation, both legal and moral, to ensure that it not only promotes an environment where all individuals can participate in and benefit from the sport of fencing.

West Lothian Fencing Club (thereafter referred to as the club) is fully committed to the principles laid down in this policy document and all staff, volunteers and members will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of all individuals wishing to participate in fencing at the club.

Policy Statement

The club endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in fencing, whether as individual fencers, team members, volunteers, coaches, or office-bearers in club:

- 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, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status; and
- is 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

The club is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind 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.

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

Implementation

The club will ensure that:-

- this policy is published on the club's website,
- the Executive committee takes measures to promote and enhance sports equality in the club,
- members and volunteers behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Club's constitution; and
- access to club membership is open and inclusive.

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Chair will take overall responsibility to ensure that the policy is observed.

The Committee is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to the activities of the club. They will review all the club's 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 Committee 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

The club 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 coach, member or volunteer who violates this 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 of the club should first complain to that person. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against the club itself, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the Chair. Contact details are available through the website.

The Chair will investigate the complaint personally or appoint another member of the Committee 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 Chair or other person investigating the complaint will notify both parties in writing of the outcome of the investigation and report the outcome to the Committee. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of an individual member the Committee may impose sanctions on that person in line with the Club's Constitution. Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent expulsion from the club. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the Committee will consider the severity of the matter and take account of any mitigating circumstances.

Where the violation of the Equality Policy is by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination and amounts to a criminal offence, the club will inform the appropriate authority, including the sports governing body.

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 Great Britain 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 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.

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.

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.