

**FIFE ATHLETIC CLUB**

**EQUALITY POLICY**

**JULY 2023**

## **Policy Statement**

Fife Athletic Club endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in athletics (in all its disciplines and forms), whether as athletes, casual participants, club members, officials, volunteers, coaches, office bearers or those within the governance structure:

- 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 identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, socioeconomic status 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 their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

## **Legal Obligations**

Fife Athletic Club is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind in athletics, and will, under no circumstances, condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The Club 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.

Fife Athletic Club will, therefore, seek to institute, support or contribute measures or initiatives that enable access to athletes 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 promote this policy and sports equality in athletics:

1. A copy of this document is published on the Fife Athletic Club website.
2. The Board of Fife Athletic Club will take overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation and observation of this policy, and the requirement for all members of the Club to follow this policy will be enshrined within the Articles.
3. The Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decision in relation to the activities of the Club.
4. Fife Athletic Club will collaborate fully with any Government or Scottish Athletics surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in athletics and will take account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance sports equality in athletics.
5. Fife Athletic Club will provide access to training in order to raise awareness of collective and individual responsibilities for all of its Board members, sub-committee members and Community Coach, and enable access to suitable training for anyone involved in the sport, with a focus on accredited coaches and officials in terms of equality and diversity training.

## **Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Board will review all Fife Athletic Club activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy on an annual basis and the President will report formally on this issue at the Annual General Meeting.

The Board will review the policy itself at intervals of no more than three years (or whenever changes in legislation require) and will report with recommendations to the Annual General Meeting.

## **Complaints and Compliance**

Fife Athletic Club regards all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including, but not limited to, behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is determined to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any bone fide grievances or complaints related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against anyone associated with Fife Athletic Club who violates this policy.

Any person who believes they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy should complain to the Board via the Club Secretary.

The Board will investigate the complaint or delegate to the Welfare Officer: the investigation will be conducted impartially, confidentially and without undue or unavoidable delay. Any person against whom a complaint has been made will be informed of what is alleged and by whom 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 if the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour, the Board may impose sanctions in line with the Articles of Association. Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent expulsion from Fife Athletic Club membership. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case, the Board will consider the severity of the matter and take into account any mitigating circumstances.

If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of discriminatory behaviour against Fife Athletic Club, the person may raise the matter by writing to the Head of Operations of Scottish Athletics (contact details are available on their website).

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

In the event that an individual associated with Fife Athletic Club is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the Board of Fife Athletic Club 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.

## **APPENDIX – Relevant legislation and forms of unacceptable discrimination**

### **Legal rights**

Discrimination has been legally defined through the Equality Act 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.

#### **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.

\* 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.