

The Devon County Football Association Equality Policy



To obtain this policy in large font please email info@devonfa.com

Statement

As the governing body of the game for the County of Devon, the Devon County Football Association is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the game. This Equality policy provides an agreed set of guidelines for the Devon County FA to implement to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in football, whether as casual participants, team members, volunteers, club supporters, coaches, office-bearers in clubs or those within the Devon County FA:

- Has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to age, sex, gender, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, faith, belief, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation
- 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 football without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse

To support the adoption and implementation of this policy, the Devon County FA has created the Devon County FA Equality Panel, to undertake the following roles and responsibilities:

- Ensure the implementation of this policy
- Review activities and initiatives of the Devon County FA against the aims of this policy
- Review the policy itself and adhere to guidance or amendments from The FA
- Investigate complaints or matters that are brought to the attention of the Devon County FA

The Devon County FA Equality Panel is made up of a minimum of the following:

The Equality representative from Devon County FA Council (who is also the Devon FA IAG Chair), the Equality Lead Officer, the Disciplinary Secretary, a disciplinary representative from the Devon County FA Council.

- Any other suitable agency or co-opted member with expertise to support the group, its work and this policy.

Legal Obligations

The Devon County FA is committed to avoid and eliminate discrimination of any kind in football, and will under no circumstances condone unlawful practices. The organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the appendix.



Positive Action

The Devon County FA acknowledges 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 Devon County FA 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 equality in football in Devon:

- This document will be published on the Devon County FA website
- The Chief Executive Officer of the Devon County FA will take overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy is observed
- The Board of Directors and Council will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the Devon County FA
- The Devon County FA 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
- The Devon County FA will provide access to training for all of its Equality Panel members, Board of Directors, Council and Staff, to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities. Equality and Diversity training opportunities will be offered annually for club and league officials, accredited coaches and affiliated referees.
- It will be a condition of membership of the Devon County FA that England Accredited Football Clubs:
 - Formally adopt this policy, The recommended Equality Policy of The FA's England Football accreditation scheme, or produce their own equality and diversity policy in terms that are consistent with these; and
 - Take steps to ensure that their Committees, 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 the Devon County FA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy
- It will be a condition of the Devon County FA membership that non-England Football Accredited clubs, individual and corporate members:
 - Commit to act in accordance with this policy; and
 - Support such measures and initiatives that the Devon County FA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation



The Devon County FA Equality Panel will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

The Devon County FA Equality Panel will review all activities and initiatives of The Devon County FA against the aims of this policy on an annual basis, and The Equality Representative from Devon County FA Council will report formally on this issue in the Associations AGM report.

The Devon County FA Equality Panel, or where appropriate a designated project leader, will review any measures or initiatives that The Devon County FA may institute or take part in to promote and enhance sports equality in football, and will report their findings formally in the Associations AGM report.

Devon County FA Equality Panel will review the policy itself at intervals of no more than 3 years (or when necessary due to changes in legislation), and will report with recommendations if required as part of the Associations AGM report.

Complaints and Compliance

The Devon County FA Equality Panel regards all forms of discriminatory behaviour 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 Equality and Diversity Policy of The Devon County FA.

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, league, individual or corporate member of The Devon County FA, should first complain to that organisation. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against The Devon County FA, the person may raise the matter by contacting the Chief Executive Officer. Contact details are listed at the end of this policy, and on the Devon County FA website: <http://www.devonfa.com/about-us/staff-contact-details>

The Chief Executive Officer will investigate the complaint personally, or appoint a member of The Devon County FA Equality Panel 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, reported to The Devon County FA Chief Executive Officer and recorded with The Devon County FA Equality Panel. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of an individual member, corporate member, or member club The Devon County FA may impose sanctions on that person or organisation in line with The FA. Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent expulsion from membership of The Devon County FA. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case The Devon County FA Equality Panel 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 appropriate authority will be informed.



If you are unsatisfied with the response or action of Devon County FA to your grievance or complaint, or in cases where you feel contacting Devon County FA is not appropriate, please contact The FA's Customer Relations Department, Tel (0)844 980 8200, or write to Customer Relations, The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London, SW1P 9EQ

In the event that an individual or organisation associated with The Devon County FA is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the Devon County FA Equality Panel 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.

This policy is approved by The Devon County FA Board of Directors, Equality Panel, and Chief Executive Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Morrison", written over a horizontal line.

Paul Morrison (Chief Executive Officer)

12th November 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Leach", written over a horizontal line.

Bernard Leach (Chairman)

Important Contacts

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Customer Relations Department
The Football Association
Wembley Stadium | PO Box 1966
London | SW1P 9EQ
(0)844 980 8200
Email via: <http://www.thefa.com/contact-thefa/about-customer-relations>

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 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.

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.

(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).

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.