



Isle of Man Football Association Equality Policy

Foreword by the Chair

The Isle of Man Football Association (IOMFA) is fully committed to the principle of “Football For All”, encouraging participation across all sections of society, regardless of age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race or sexual orientation.

At the IOMFA, we believe that everyone should be able take part in football across the Isle of Man in an enjoyable, safe and inclusive environment and we are working hard to make this happen.

The aim of this Equality Policy is to:

- set out our commitment to equality in Isle of Man football,
- show the principles of equality we adhere to,
- outline our obligations to all those involved in football, including staff, and
- show our commitment to taking firm action if required against anyone who behaves in a way that is discriminatory.

Stephen Carter
Chair, Isle of Man Football Association
December 2021

1. Policy Statement

The IOMFA endorses the principle of equality in sport and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in football can do so, whether as participants, team members, volunteers, coaches, referees, office-bearers or those within the IOMFA.

We will ensure that everyone involved in football:

- o has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, disability, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, race/ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status,
- o can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and
- o is able to enjoy football without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

2. Legal obligations

The IOMFA is committed to preventing and eliminating 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, bullying and abuse. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Additional Notes.

3. Positive action

The principle of positive action allows for the IOMFA to take positive steps to counteract the effects of physical or cultural barriers – whether real or perceived – that restrict the opportunity of any section of the community to participate equally and fully in football if they want to.

The IOMFA will seek to institute and support 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.

4. Implementation

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

- o This document will be published on our website.
- o The IOMFA Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the IOMFA.
- o The IOMFA Board, staff and Council members will undertake equality training and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- o It will be a condition of IOMFA affiliation that member clubs:
 - formally adopt this policy, or produce their own equality and diversity policy in terms that are consistent with it,
 - take steps to ensure that their committees, members, players, coaches and volunteers behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Club's constitution,
 - ensure that access to club membership is open and inclusive, and
 - support such measures and initiatives that the IOMFA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.
- o It will be a condition of IOMFA affiliation that individuals and members:
 - commit to act in accordance with this policy,
 - support such measures and initiatives that the IOMFA may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

5. Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The IOMFA Board Chair will take overall accountability for ensuring that the policy is observed. A designated Equality Champion will be appointed from the IOMFA Board to monitor equality issues and represent the Board on the Inclusion Advisory Group.

The IOMFA Board, or where appropriate the designated Equality Champion, will review any measures or initiatives that the IOMFA may institute or take part in to promote equality in football across the Isle of Man and will report their findings to the AGM annually.

The Board will review the policy annually (or more regularly due to changes in legislation) and will report with recommendations to the AGM.

6. Complaints and compliance

The IOMFA 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.

The IOMFA will initiate appropriate disciplinary action without delay against any employee, Board or Council member, player, coach, referee or volunteer who breaches the IOMFA Equality 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 club, individual, staff, Board or Council member, should follow the IOMFA's complaints procedure.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint should first complain to that person, organisation or club. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against IOMFA staff, Board or Council members, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the Chair at the IOMFA office address.

The Chair 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 the allegation 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 the IOMFA Board. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory

behaviour on the part of an individual or member club the Board may impose sanctions on that person or organisation in line with the IOMFA's Constitution.

Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent suspension and expulsion from the IOMFA and any club or league that affiliates to it. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the IOMFA Board will consider the severity of the matter and take account of any mitigating circumstances.

Where a football-related disciplinary matter includes discriminatory abuse, in violation of this Equality Policy, (whether in person, in writing or online), the disciplinary process will be handled by the FA's Serious Case Panel

Where the violation of this Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amounts to a criminal offence, the Police or appropriate Authority will be informed.

If a complaint subsequently becomes subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the IOMFA will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking further action.

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Additional Notes: 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 Employment (Sex Discrimination) Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Isle of Man Equality Act 2017 is a law which harmonises where possible, and in some cases extends, protection from discrimination. It came into force 18 July 2017.

Discrimination refers to unfavourable treatment on the basis of particular characteristics, which are known as the 'protected characteristics'. Under the Equality Act 2017, 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 2017, 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.