



Watford Football Club's Community Sports and Education Trust

Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

Equal opportunities are based on respect of individual human dignity, fairness and justice. Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust (Trust) recognises that certain sections of the community have not only been affected in the past by discrimination but are still denied opportunities for developing their talents to the full. The success of our business relies upon the Trust attracting and retaining people from the widest possible backgrounds with the widest, most diverse range of attitudes, opinions and beliefs.

The Trust is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against customers. This policy is intended to assist the Trust to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination. The Trust's Head of Skills and Safeguarding is responsible for this policy and any necessary training on equal opportunities.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free from harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment. Please see the Trust's Harassment and Bullying Policy, which deals with these issues. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

It is the duty of all Supervisors and Managers to uphold this policy and to report any suspected actions of discrimination or harassment to the Community Director or to a member of the Senior Manager Team immediately. All employees are responsible for their own behaviour and are expected to act in a manner that avoids and discourages any form of discrimination or harassment.

Discrimination can be deeply rooted and can take many forms, some of which are not easily recognisable. Even people with the best of intentions often discriminate unintentionally and do not realise the impact of their actions. The Trust believes, therefore, that the adoption of an explicit Equal Opportunities Policy will: -

- Raise the general level of awareness throughout the Trust.
- Set out and clarify expectations for staff, directors and customers, and the other agencies with which we work to provide professional football and associated services.

- Ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.
- Facilitate the monitoring of practice.

This procedure is non-contractual, does not form part of your Contract of Employment and may be varied from time to time.

Equal Opportunities Statement

The Trust aims to ensure that no employee, former employee (where relevant), job applicant, customer, board member, participant in our community programmes, contractor or supplier is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, and has a genuine opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own talents and desires, without regard to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The Trust is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities to ensure that the talent and skills of all employees are maximised. The Trust's Policy is to treat all employees with respect and dignity and to ensure that employees are not victimised or subjected to harassment, or direct or indirect discrimination because of a protected characteristic.

The Trust seeks to fulfil this commitment to equal opportunities through the application of policies and procedures which are consistent and equitable and which recognise the expertise and ability of each individual.

All allegations of direct or indirect discrimination will be thoroughly and promptly investigated. Where allegations are substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal will be taken against any person responsible.

The Legislative Obligations

The Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy has been developed within the framework of existing legislation, the leading statutory authority being The Equality Act 2010 which came into force on 1 October 2010. The purpose of the Equality Act 2010 is to simplify discrimination legislation and create a more consistent and effective framework, while at the same time extending discrimination protection. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly or harass customers or clients because of a protected characteristic in the provision goods and services.

Implications of the Legislation

If these legal requirements are contravened, both the Trust and the individual concerned may be rendered liable to legal proceedings. However, if the Trust can prove that they have taken the necessary steps to prevent acts of discrimination, only the individual will be considered liable for the unlawful act. In addition, any employee who is found to discriminate against any fellow colleague or associate or customer or participates in any discriminatory behaviour will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

Employers may be liable for acts of unlawful discrimination committed by their employees against other employees or customers during their employment unless they can show that they took such steps as were reasonably practicable to prevent those acts. There is no limit on compensation for unlawful discrimination, which includes compensation for injury to feelings and personal injury.

Employers may take positive action in the form of proportionate measures to encourage or train people from an under-represented group to apply for jobs, overcome a perceived disadvantage or meet specific needs based on a protected characteristic. For example, an employer could facilitate women having access to childcare facilities or provide certain religious groups with time off for religious observance.

Definitions of Terms as used in the Policy

This policy document refers to the following categories of discrimination: -

Direct Discrimination – is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

Indirect Discrimination – is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied to everyone but adversely affects individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic more than others and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment – is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination - is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic. (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive discrimination - is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Victimisation – occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or intentionally made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need for a complainant to compare his or her treatment with someone who has not made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act 2010. For example, if a blind employee raises a grievance that the employer is not complying with its duty to make reasonable adjustments, and is then systematically excluded from all meetings, such behaviour could amount to victimisation.

Disability Discrimination – includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability and the failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage caused by a disability.

Failure to make Reasonable Adjustments - is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Application of the Policy

Employment

The Trust will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment; terms and conditions of employment; promotion; opportunities for training; pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Please refer to the HR flowcharts

which outline the procedures to be followed for Recruitment & Selection and Training & Development. The flowcharts can be accessed on the shared drive and refer to standard documents, to ensure consistency of approach and good practice.

Post-employment Discrimination

The Trust will not discriminate against any former employee for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics. For example, when providing references for future employment, or in conducting the Appeals Procedure for any former employee.

Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the Trust

The Trust will not discriminate unlawfully against customers using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the Trust. Employees should report any harassment or bullying by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

Your Responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the Trust to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Trust for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Club's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

The Trust provide access to a rolling programme of training for all of its staff, board members to raise awareness of our collective and individual responsibilities with regards to equality.

It will be a condition of working with the Trust that providers will:

- Act in accordance with this policy
- Support such measures and initiatives that the Trust may establish or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

Grievance

If you believe that you have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the Trust's Grievance Procedure to make a complaint. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate. The Trust will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Promoting Equal Opportunities

The Trust will, within its available resources, aim to achieve equality of opportunity, both in the provision of its services, and in the recruitment and employment of staff.

In pursuit of this aim, the Trust will not discriminate, either directly or indirectly for reasons relating to a protected characteristic, by applying conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified. To this end, the Trust commits itself to ensuring that: No event, action or behaviour is condoned or promoted within the Trust which is threatening, insulting, demeaning or otherwise unwelcoming to any individual or section of the community on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

Action will be taken to address any words or behaviour infringement by spectators in accordance with the Ground Regulations and other notices displayed around the Stadium. Racial, homophobic or discriminatory abuse, chanting or harassment is strictly forbidden and will result in arrest and/or rejection from the Ground in accordance to the Parent Club's procedure. The Trust, through the Parent Club, may impose a ban for one or more matches.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

Part-time and Fix-Time Work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the Trust to review its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. The Trust will monitor the ethnic and gender

composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. Where barriers to equal opportunities are identified, any necessary changes will be implemented. Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Equal Opportunities

The Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust is committed to being a fair employer and involver of volunteers and a fair service provider. We want a workplace and volunteering environment where everybody has equality of opportunity and we want equality of treatment for those we provide services and support to, or otherwise encounter.

Promoting equality and diversity is an essential part of our mission and values and key to our effectiveness.

Our diversity vision is that we should 'act inclusively, upholding equality law, treating everyone fairly and seeking to provide a culture which delivers the best outcomes for the diverse society in which we operate'

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy aims to promote equality and diversity, ensuring that delivery of our objectives and the demonstration of expected behaviors is the responsibility of all staff, trustees and volunteers within the Trust.

Policy Name	Equal Opportunities Policy
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