

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Introduction

At Sport Structures we recognise that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to equal opportunity. We are therefore engaged and committed to promoting a best-practice environment, where all individuals and groups are treated with respect and dignity. All staff/associate workforce, learners and any related third party are required to adhere to this policy and to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

No one should feel threatened, degraded or experience discrimination on the grounds of the following nine protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010: *age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation*. Furthermore, we seek to ensure that people are provided with equal opportunity and do not face discrimination based on training or caring status or economic background. This policy is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure equality, fairness, and respect for all employees, regardless of their employment status (temporary, part-time, or full-time) and increase the awareness amongst staff/associates, apprentices, learners and any other related third party on the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion, and how Sport Structures upholds them.
2. Prohibit unlawful discrimination based on the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010, including:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
3. Actively oppose and prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination, including in areas such as:
 - Pay and benefits
 - Terms and conditions of employment
 - Handling grievances and disciplinary matters
 - Dismissal procedures

- Redundancy processes
 - Parental leave
 - Requests for flexible working arrangements
 - Selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities.
4. Improve current practices and ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded through the company's policies, procedures, values and practices.
 5. Fulfil our obligations by adopting legal, national and local guidelines to ensure equality of opportunity in terms of employment.

Our Commitment

Through our behaviours, we will champion diversity, take action to tackle inequalities and create inclusive environments.

Policy Objectives

- Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, recognising them as fundamental principles of good practice that also yield positive business outcomes.
- To challenge and reduce discriminatory practice in line with our zero-tolerance approach to any discriminatory behaviour, fostering an atmosphere of dignity, respect, and appreciation for individual differences and contributions.
- To lead by example with inclusive recruitment practices championing diversity and ensuring fairness.
- To promote equality and diversity through marketing, campaigns, initiatives, and events designed to celebrate the rich diversity of staff, learners, and local communities. This may include allyships and national celebration days such as International Women's Day and Mental Health Awareness.
- To be open-minded to difference and create a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages a diverse workforce representative of society.
- To ensure that all employees have the right to work in a supportive and safe environment, free from harassment, and to support those who speak out against discrimination or poor practice.
- To address complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination seriously and promptly, treating such behaviour as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and disciplinary procedures. Severe complaints may constitute gross misconduct and result in dismissal without notice. Additionally, sexual harassment is recognised as both an employment rights and criminal matter, with actions potentially leading to criminal prosecution under relevant legislation.
- To ensure all staff/associates, apprentices, learners and any related third parties take proactive steps to reduce any inequalities.
- For apprentices and learners: To provide initial advice and guidance that is impartial and seeks to ensure that individuals are offered appropriate training opportunities for them to achieve their aims without bias.

- To understand, respond and support the individual needs of our staff, apprentices, and learners, and in doing so ensure these individuals are encouraged to develop to their full potential. For apprentices and learners:
 - We will ensure that an effective access arrangements procedure is in place and deployed so everyone can engage in our courses/qualifications/programmes.
 - We will support all apprentices and learners as far as reasonably possible (but subject to funding and health and safety requirements) to pursue the learning programme of their choice. In circumstances where this is not possible, we will identify alternative options/provisions.
 - We will provide access to fair assessment procedures
- To proactively reach out to diverse communities and be inclusive in our design principles thinking about the range of needs of our customers, volunteers, people engaged in research methodology and employees of our partners.
- To provide equal access for our staff to training, development and promotion opportunities ensuring that progression is rewarded based on aptitude and ability.
- To influence the sport and physical activity sector to be more diverse and inclusive through the sharing of key learnings, learning and people development, and role modelling inclusive behaviours and actions.
- To monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and regularly review employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness, updating them and the policy to align with changes in legislation.
- To make staff decisions based on merit, with exceptions only where necessary and limited exemptions permitted under the Equality Act.
- To monitor workforce composition, including age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability, to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives. This monitoring extends to evaluating the effectiveness of the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy and any associated action plans, conducting annual reviews, and taking appropriate measures to address identified issues.

Responsibilities

It is ultimately the accountability of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead, to ensure that this policy and all accompanying procedures are implemented, published and accessible to all staff, learners and any relevant third parties. We have assigned a member of our team who will take the lead responsibility. However, a commitment of this policy is that equality, diversity, and inclusion are the responsibility of all members of the Sport Structures team. Sport Structures is proactive in the implementation of this policy and achieving an inclusive culture as an organisation, as well as inclusive practice in delivery.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead is:

Jo Pilgrim

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Communication

The policy will be available and easily accessible to everyone in the following ways:

- It will be included in the staff handbook.
- It will be accessible through the company shared drive and on the website.
- It will be discussed/covered in staff training and staff meetings.
- It will form part of any recruitment and induction process.
- It will be included in the Learner Pack.

Our Values

We believe acting equitably and embracing diversity are embedded into our company values:

- Passion
- Integrity
- Excellence
- Togetherness

Legal Requirements

In order to fulfil its legal obligations, Sport Structures' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy comply with all relevant equality legislation including The Equality Act 2010. Sport Structures will ensure that any future amendments to any relevant legislation are followed and adhered to.

Sport Structures regard discrimination, victimization, and harassment as serious misconduct. Any employee who discriminates against, harasses or victimizes any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action.

Implementation

Effective implementation of this policy ensures that we promote equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination, eradicate harassment, and proactively ensure access for all. This is achieved by:

- Establish and implement an annual improvement action plan.
- Ensuring all staff, learners and any related third parties are made aware of this policy.
- Any related responsibilities ensuring all staff are trained in equality, diversity, and inclusion regularly to implement this policy and promote it.
- Ensuring apprenticeship employers will receive training on equality, diversity, and inclusion at induction.
- Ensuring apprentices and learners will receive training on equality, diversity and inclusion, which will be embedded and delivered within their apprenticeship/programme.
- Ensuring all teaching, learning and assessment materials embed good practice principles on equality, diversity, and inclusion to ensure apprentices and learners benefit from this enrichment during their apprenticeship/programme.
- Ensuring apprenticeship delivery, teaching, learning, and assessment practice is observed and monitored for all staff with clear objectives set for embedding and delivering high-quality equality, diversity and inclusion principles, including Fundamental British Values.

- Ensuring this policy is read in conjunction with other policies and procedures such as Recruitment and Selection Policy, Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Quality Assurance Policy.
- Ensuring all staff, learners and any related third parties have an accessible complaints and grievances policy available.
- Monitoring and addressing any imbalances concerning recruitment, attendance and success rate by a wide range of equality and diversity characteristics.
- Ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion is a frequent agenda items across the company and that insights gathered from monitoring are discussed.
- Ensuring zero tolerance on any acts of discrimination on the grounds of the nine protected characteristics outlined within the Equality Act 2010.

Definitions

Equality	Equality is about having a society where everyone is free from assumptions and discrimination based on factors such as gender, race or disability ¹ . Equality refers to creating equality of opportunity, which does not necessarily mean treating everyone the same. Equality is not just about equal numbers or reasonable representation based on the sector or society being measured. Instead, it involves treating people in such a way as to ensure overall fairness and prevent discrimination ² .
Direct discrimination	Where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.
Associative discrimination	Direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
Discrimination by perception	Direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.
Indirect discrimination	Occurs when there is a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.
Harassment	Behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Employees can now complain about the behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

¹ Equal Opportunities Commission

² UK Sport & sportscotland: Equalities Legislation: A guidance for Governing Bodies of Sport

Harassment by a third party	Employers are potentially liable for the harassment of their staff or customers by people they don't themselves employ, i.e. a contractor.
Victimisation	Occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation.
Diversity	Considering the unique differences in people and groups. Respecting, valuing, and celebrating these differences.
Inclusion	Positive action and steps are taken to proactively include people. Individuals feel welcomed and included and have a sense of belonging. Their voices are heard, and their needs are met.