Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 Hertfordshire Golf ('The County') shares England Golf's belief that golf belongs to everyone. All who play and all who aspire to play must have an equal opportunity to do so.

1.2 The County is committed to the principles of equality and diversity throughout its paid and volunteer workforce, throughout its membership base and any others with whom the County engages.

1.3 The County is a merged County body that represents golf as a whole in the county of Hertfordshire.

1.4 The County considers that everyone should play their part in making golf inclusive and aims to ensure that all people, irrespective of background or Protected Characteristics, have a genuine opportunity to engage with golf. We will not disadvantage any individual by imposing conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.

2. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

2.1 This Policy shall apply to, and be binding upon The County, its board of directors, staff, volunteers, coaches, contractors, squad players, agents, and representatives working, holding office or acting for or on behalf of The County.

2.2 As a membership organisation, the County also requires that all member golf clubs affiliated to the County commit to the principles set out in this policy. It is a requirement of affiliation to the County and to England Golf that affiliated golf clubs adopt an Equality and Diversity policy that is consistent with that of England Golf and the County. Failure to do so may result in action being taken by the County and/or England Golf which could result in loss of benefits of affiliation including access to WHS handicaps or disaffiliation to England Golf and the County.

3. OTHER IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

This policy works with other documents adopted by the County, in particular:

- Disciplinary Regulations which may be used to deal with alleged breaches of this policy.
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, and Safeguarding Adults Policy, which will be followed in respect of any matters which give rise to a safeguarding concern.
- Code(s) of Conduct which set out the standards of behaviour and conduct expected from those who are attending County events, representing, working for or otherwise engaging with the County in some capacity.
- Data Protection Policy which sets out how we will handle personal data, including data collected to monitor diversity in line with this Policy.
- Complaints Policy which may be used to deal with concerns raised about the actions of the County.

4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A. WHAT WE WILL DO

1. Promote fairness, equality, diversity and respect for everyone working, volunteering or participating in the sport of golf or otherwise engaging with the County.

2. Encourage the involvement of all those who wish to be involved in golf regardless of background, ability, or any Protected Characteristic.

3. Ensure that all competitions, events and activities are administered by the County are carried out in a fair and equitable way (except where specific situations and conditions prevent this, or where we consider that Positive Action is a proportionate way to achieve a legitimate aim).

4. Monitor and review County policies, procedures and regulations to ensure that they are consistent with the requirements of this policy.

5. Where practical we will take steps to monitor the diversity of the County's members, participants, players, volunteers and others that we may engage with in order to measure and assess the impact of this policy

6. Make reasonable adjustments for those with a disability.

7. Publish this policy on the County website.

B. WHAT WE WON'T DO

1. Discriminate against anyone, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of a Protected Characteristic.

2. Subject anyone to less favourable treatment on the basis of them doing a Protected Act (victimisation – see section 7.C below).

3. Subject anyone to harassment in relation to a Protected Characteristic.

5. REPORTING PROCEDURES

If you are concerned about the behaviour or conduct of someone at a County event, someone representing the County, or any other breach of this policy:

5.1 please report the matter to the County Secretary or to any other member of the Board, giving as much detail as possible.

5.2 If the matter is reported verbally, and you are able, please follow the verbal report in writing as soon as possible.

5.3 The County will consider the appropriate way to deal with the matter, which may include referring the matter to and/or seeking guidance from England Golf.

6. HOW WE WILL DEAL WITH BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

6.1 When we receive a report or a concern that relates to this policy, we will ask a member of the Board to consider the matter initially. This will usually be the Chair but there may be circumstances in which another person is asked. They will consider the appropriate next steps, which may include the following:

a. seeking further information in relation matters raised

b. seeking guidance from England Golf or any other appropriate body or organisation

c. referring the matter to another body or organisation

d. dealing with the matter informally

e. deciding which procedure is the most appropriate, such as the Employee Disciplinary Procedure, the Safeguarding Policies or the Disciplinary Regulations, to progress the matter formally.

6.2 The County will usually inform the person reporting the matter of the next steps and/or the outcome of the matter. However, there may be circumstances in which we are not able to disclose full details to the reporting individual. This may be because the law prevents us from doing so, because some information is confidential or to protect the safety or wellbeing of those involved.

7. KEY CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

A. The Equality Act 2010 and Discrimination

Every individual and organisation to whom this Policy applies must not act in a way which is directly or indirectly discriminatory and must make reasonable

adjustments to avoid discriminating against anyone with a Protected Characteristic. Failure to do so will be considered a breach of this Policy, and may be a breach of the Equality Act 2010,

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly against individuals or groups with certain **"Protected Characteristics"**. The **"Protected Characteristics"** are listed in section 4 of the Act:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Marriage and Civil Partnership;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or Belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual Orientation.

Direct Discrimination

Direct Discrimination is defined at section 13(1) of the Equality Act 2010: "*A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if, because of a protected characteristic, A treats B less favourably than A treats or would treat others.*"

For example, if an action or decision is taken by a county body which treats females less favourably than males, this would be considered direct discrimination on the grounds of sex, which is a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect Discrimination is defined at section 19(1) of the Equality Act 2010: "*A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if A applies to B a provision, criterion or practice which is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic of B's.*"

Indirect discrimination occurs where less favourable treatment is not necessarily the main effect or objective of an action or decision.

Since the nature of indirect discrimination is that the discriminatory effect an unexpected or unforeseen effect of a good faith decision, complaints of indirect discrimination should therefore be considered carefully and objectively, and not dismissed out of hand purely because the effect was not an expected or intentional one.

If, for example, a county organisation introduces a rule that club competitions can only be played on Saturdays, this rule would prevent members with certain religious beliefs from taking part in the competition. Although it may not have been the intention of the golf club, the effect of the rule is the less favourable treatment of members on the grounds of religion or belief, which is a protected characteristic. This is indirect discrimination.

Actions and Intentions

An action or decision will still be considered discriminatory even if the less favourable treatment is unintentional. It may not always be obvious to the perpetrator that their actions are discriminatory. Indirect discrimination is often unintentional, but it is not a defence to an allegation of discrimination to say that the perpetrator did not mean to discriminate against a person or group. Discrimination can arise out of actions and decisions but can also arise out of omissions and failure to take actions or decisions.

Reasonable Adjustments

Everybody to whom this Policy applies is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to avoid discriminating against any individual or group with a Protected Characteristic of Disability.

The duty is to make *reasonable* adjustments. It is not unreasonable for adjustments to cost time, money, or other resources. However, an adjustment may not be reasonable if the cost is disproportionately high or making the adjustment would be unfeasible, and the resources required to make an adjustment are an important factor to be considered in deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable.

Positive Action

It can be lawful to make decisions that discriminate on the basis of a Protected Characteristic in very limited and exceptional circumstances, if the discrimination is a 'Positive Action' taken in order to address an underrepresented group or Protected Characteristic. Positive Actions must be reasonable, justifiable, and clearly linked to a legitimate aim.

Examples

In a golfing context, some examples of unlawful discrimination might include:

- Not allowing the use of golf buggies, as this increases the cost of maintaining the course;
- Restricting the number of tee times available to women during peak hours at a golf course;

B. Harassment

Harassment is defined in section 26(1) of the Equality Act 2010. Harassment occurs where a person engages in unwanted conduct related to a Protected

Characteristic (outlined in the Equality Act 2010), which has the purpose of either:

- Violating the other person's dignity; or
- Creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the other person.

In determining whether conduct amounts to harassment, regard is had to:

- The perception of the victim;
- Whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have the perceived effect; and
- The Wider circumstances of the matter.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment occurs where a person engages in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and the conduct has the purpose or effects outlined above.

One Off Incidents

A single, isolated, or one-off incident can still amount to harassment. The key consideration is the purpose or effect of the conduct.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Harassment can still occur even if it not based on a Protected Characteristic. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 made it a civil, and sometimes a criminal, offence to carry out a course of conduct that amounts to harassment.

Examples

In a golfing context, some examples of unlawful harassment might include:

- Employees making unwanted or inappropriate contact with colleagues at a golf club or facility;
- Targeting disabled golfers using buggies and demanding to see proof of a disability where this is not required by the terms of competition;
- Disproportionate and public criticism or sanctioning of an individual's behaviour by an organisation for irrelevant or personal reasons.

C. Victimisation

Victimisation is defined in section 27(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

Victimisation occurs where a person suffers a detriment because they do a protected act, or are believed to have done a protected act.

Protected Act

A protected act includes bringing legal proceedings or making a complaint under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to discrimination, harassment, bullying, or any other issue related to equality, diversity or Protected Characteristics.

Detriment

A detriment can be any less favourable treatment, including direct acts such as suspensions, fines, sanctions, and verbal and physical aggression.

It is not necessary to show that somebody is being treated less favourably than somebody else who did not do a protected act, only that they have been subject to a detriment because of a protected act.

Examples

In a golfing context, some examples of unlawful victimisation include:

- Initiating disciplinary proceedings against a person as a result of making a protected act;
- Ignoring a person's valid input into the management of a club or county after that person has made a protected act;

De-selecting a player from a squad or team as a result of that person doing a protected act.

8. Further guidance and support

You can find further information from the following sources:

- England Golf ED&I pages on website
- England Golf Equality Guidance
- equalityhumanrights.com/en

The overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Board.

Responsible Person: Chair
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