

Equality Policy



1. Policy Statement

Ross County Football Club (the “Club”) endorses the principle of Equality and is committed to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved with the Club, regardless of their role, current or potential:

- have a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, regardless of their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation; and
- can be assured of an environment in which their rights and dignity and individual worth are respected and valued, and in particular that they are able to be involved and participate without the threat of discrimination, intimidation, victimisation, bullying, harassment or abuse.

2. Policy Objectives

This Policy has the following objectives:

- To promote fair and equitable treatment for everyone involved with the Club, in whatever capacity.
- To ensure that no one working for, wishing to work for or working on behalf of the Club receives less favourable treatment on the grounds set out in 1.
- To adopt a planned approach (strategically and operationally) to eliminating perceived barriers which discriminate against or exclude particular groups.
- To give clear guidance and communication to all individuals who, either administer an area of The Club or work for the Club on its commitment to Equality.
- To ensure that the content of policies, procedures, competitions, regulations (where applicable) and assessments provides equal opportunity for all except where specific situations or conditions properly or reasonably prevent this.
- To adopt systems and procedures which ensure all materials prepared, produced or distributed on behalf of the Club and all relevant public statements made on behalf of the Club reflect its commitment to equality and inclusion.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all current and potential employees (temporary), workers, Directors, Co-optees, consultants, agents, sub-contractors, volunteers, and any other person providing services on behalf of the Club (“associated persons”).
- 3.2 The Policy extends to all activities of the Club.

4. Policy Overview

- 4.1 The Club is committed to remove and eliminate any direct or indirect discrimination of any form or kind within the Club structures and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in Appendix A.

5. Positive Action

- 5.1 The principle of Equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It entails taking positive steps to counteract the effects of barriers – whether real or perceived – that restrict the opportunity for all to participate equally and fully.
- 5.2 The Club will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to the Club and participation in associated activities by people from any group that is under-represented or has difficulty accessing it.
- 5.3 The Club will furthermore seek to apply employment practices in general, and recruitment and selection practices more specifically, which encourage and support people with protected characteristics to gain access to work or training.

6. Reasonable adjustments

- 6.1 The Club recognises that it has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons.
- 6.2 The duty to make reasonable adjustments may include the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if these make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to carry out their role. It may also include making changes to working arrangements.
- 6.3 The Club will consider all requests for adjustments and where possible will accommodate any reasonable requests. Where appropriate, advice may be sought from specialist agencies.

7. Implementation

- 7.1 To achieve these objectives, the Club is committed to promote and advance equal opportunity through the Club structures which will cover all areas of our organisation. The CEO is ultimately responsible for implementing the Policy.
- 7.2 The following steps will be taken to publicise this Policy and promote Equality within the Club:
 - A copy of this Policy will be published on the Club's website.
 - The CEO and the Board will take full account of the Policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the Club.
 - The Club will collaborate fully with any practical 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 Equality.
 - The Club will provide access to training for all of its Board Members and staff to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities.

8. Responsibilities

- 8.1 The Club's Board are accountable for equality and will receive regular updates on the Club's activities and initiatives and the implementation of this Policy from the CEO.
- 8.2 The CEO, or where appropriate a designated project leader, will review any measures or initiatives that the Club may institute or take part in to promote and enhance equal.
- 8.3 The CEO will review all Club activities and initiatives against the aims of the Policy and will report to the Board on developments and highlights.
- 8.4 It is the role of the CEO and the Board to address any actual or potential breaches of this Policy.

9. Disciplinary Process

- 9.1 The Club reserves the right to audit compliance with the Policy from time to time. If you are an employee, a worker or casual staff and misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this Policy the Club disciplinary procedures will be used in addition to any appropriate external measures. Disciplinary action may ultimately lead to dismissal.

Appendix A – Legal Notes

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 new 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 characteristic¹. 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 could 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.

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.