

## Equality Policy

### 1. Introduction

At British Canoeing, we are committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace that values and respects the unique contributions of every individual. We strive to provide a respectful and considerate environment where everyone can be themselves and where they are supported to accomplish goals and the ambitions of the organisation.

This policy sets out British Canoeing's approach to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion and what we will do to create a safe and inclusive organisation that learns and grows to proactively dismantle barriers, eliminate discrimination, and create equity for our people.

See Appendix A – Definitions of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion

### 2. Scope

The policy applies to all employees, job applicants and volunteers. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity, outcome and experience also apply to how staff should treat each other, visitors, contractors, service providers, suppliers and any other persons associated with the functions of British Canoeing.

It applies equally to all aspects of the employment cycle including recruitment and selection, promotion, learning and development, grievances, sickness and absence, conduct, terms and conditions of service and reasons for termination.

### 3. Policy Statement

At British Canoeing, we are committed to providing equality of opportunity, outcomes and experiences and to fostering good relations for all. We will work to ensure that all of our staff, as well as those who seek to apply to work with us, are treated fairly and are not subjected to unlawful discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristic(s).

### 4. Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework of protection against direct and/or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions, in premises, at work, in education, associations and transport. It protects individuals and promotes a fair and more equal society.

#### 4.1 The Nine 'Protected Characteristics'

- Age
- Disability, including long term health conditions
- Gender reassignment (a personal sense of one's own gender; this can correspond to or differ from the sex we are assigned at birth)
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (includes race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition to the nine Protected Characteristics, we also include socio-economic disadvantage and mental health status as these can lead to discrimination.

See Appendix B – Definitions of Protected Characteristics

#### 4.2 Direct and Indirect Discrimination

The protection afforded to each of the equality strands varies:

- Direct discrimination includes discrimination by association or perception for those listed above, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.
- Indirect discrimination applies to all the strands except for that of pregnancy and maternity.
- Harassment and, harassment by a third party apply to all the strands, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership and, pregnancy and maternity.

#### 4.3 Types of Unlawful Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 sets out protections for individuals against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

See Appendix C – Types of Unlawful Discrimination

### 5. Our Approach

In addition to being unjust, discrimination on the grounds of these characteristics, including any future additions to the Equality Act, represents a lost opportunity to draw on rich and diverse perspectives and experiences and denies individuals a voice and an opportunity to reach their full potential.

We believe that discrimination and disadvantage can take different forms and are not always overt or intended; nevertheless, the impact can be profound. We are committed to eliminating unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. Any breach of the policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, which in serious cases could lead to dismissal.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is a high priority in the British Canoeing People Strategy, in line with it being a cross-cutting theme in our Stronger Together Strategic plan. The focus is ensuring this is embedded across our work, and ensuring that these themes are widely shared so that staff feel valued and included, and that diversity is encouraged and respected.

Our Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion #WePaddleTogether outlines the steps we are taking which will deliver our equality aims and objectives.

### 6. Accountabilities and Responsibilities

British Canoeing board members, senior leaders, managers and employees all share responsibility for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and ensuring that this policy is implemented in practice. Specific roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

#### 6.1 Leaders and Managers will:

- Lead by example and champion equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation.

- Treat everyone at British Canoeing with dignity and respect, challenging unacceptable behaviour.
- Be responsible for creating a climate where the differences that individuals bring are valued.
- Foster good relations between all employees.
- Ensure that their direct reports attend equality, diversity and inclusion workshops frequently, in addition to their induction.
- Ensure all staff are aware of this Policy and know how to report discrimination, harassment or bullying, and that reporting incidents does not result in victimisation.
- Present their staff with information (or knowledge about where to find such information) about employee rights as defined by British Canoeing's policies.
- Deal with complaints as fairly and as promptly as possible.
- Ensure any individuals engaged in work or activities on behalf of British Canoeing are aware of the policy or have access to the policy if required.

#### 6.2 All employees will:

- Treat others in accordance with our Values.
- Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedure, ensuring that their practices are consistent with its contents and legislation.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour where it is safe to do so.
- Be aware of their responsibilities in reporting inappropriate behaviour(s) and raise any incident(s) that breach policy and procedure, in a safe manner.
- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, through understanding EDI concepts and terminology, leading by example, creating safe spaces for open conversations, celebrating diversity and being an advocate for change.
- Contribute to organisational initiatives to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Conduct themselves in accordance with and promote British Canoeing's Values.

#### 6.3 Human Resources will:

- Ensure that the Equality Policy is updated following legislative changes.
- Request equality information on the protected characteristics from job applicants on application to a new post and employed staff assuring staff that this information will be kept confidential.
- Regularly review applicant equality monitoring data to understand if there are any barriers to selection.
- Ensure that all HR policies and procedures are Equality Impact Assessed.
- Advise on and manage staff complaints and grievances in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion issues.
- Advise the Senior Leadership Team and line managers on best practice on staffing issues taking into account the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in all advice that is provided.
- Provide guidance to line managers regarding the management of staffing matters related to disabilities, particularly in consideration of reasonable adjustments seeking Occupational Health Assessments if necessary.
- Provide training for managers on fair recruitment practices.
- Ensure that reward-related decisions are carefully considered in relation to equal principles.
- Conduct equal pay reviews to understand if there are any significant pay gaps.

## **7. Recruitment, Retention and Selection**

We apply the principles of the Equality Act 2010 when designing and reviewing our recruitment processes and policies. Where specialist agencies highlight best practice in recruitment, retention and progression matters, we will recommend that these practices are implemented in the wider business.

Recruitment and selection will be undertaken in accordance with British Canoeing's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure. Individuals will be selected based on their relevant merits and ability to perform the job following an open and transparent selection process.

We will provide training and information to all employees in fair recruitment, selection and progression.

See British Canoeing Employee Recruitment and Selection Policy for more details.

## **8. Training and Development**

At British Canoeing, we recognise the contribution our people make in the achievement of our Stronger Together Strategy and we are committed to supporting the development of all our staff. We aim to put activities in place to ensure everyone is competent in their role and can respond to the changing requirements of our organisation and the environment in which we operate.

British Canoeing will:

- Design, rollout and evaluate mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion workshops for all British Canoeing employees which will take place every three years.
- Design, rollout and evaluate mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training for all new starters, as a part of the induction process.
- Provide recruitment and selection training for all managers to raise awareness of unconscious bias through various types of discrimination. (See Appendix C)
- Provide training and development sessions on wider aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace, and when dealing with stakeholders.
- Share information and learning opportunities on diversity through tools such as our staff intranet, the Learning Hub, team meetings, and staff briefings.
- Ensure that organisational learning and development events are accessible to all staff and that access to events is compliant with this policy and equality and diversity legislation.
- Ensure organisational learning and development opportunities have equality, diversity and inclusion included as an integral part of delivery.

## **9. Reasonable Adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments are designed to support employee needs and to remove barriers, therefore, enabling employees with a disability and/or other additional needs to access the same benefits, terms or conditions as other employees.

We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments to support everyone to meet the requirements of their role. We aim to remove all barriers to enable our employees to use their skills effectively.

## **10. Accommodating Employee Needs**

At British Canoeing, we are committed to making reasonable adjustments to our workplace practices to ensure that individuals with specific requirements related to cultural, religious, disability, or gender-based factors can fully participate and excel in their roles.

Where employees have needs that may require adjustments to existing workplace practices, we will thoroughly assess the situation and consider the practicality of implementing changes. These reasonable adjustments are guided by legal requirements and best practices.

## **11. Equality Impact Assessments**

The purpose of conducting an Equality Impact Assessment is to examine the main functions, policies and procedures of British Canoeing to see whether they have the potential to affect people differently. Our policies and procedures are impact assessed and we aim to design and implement policies and procedures to meet the diverse needs of our workforce.

Equality impact assessments will be used when creating new policies, procedures and strategies.

## **12. Diversity Data**

Monitoring workforce diversity can help highlight workplace inequality and under-representation, identify underlying causes of discrimination and help to remove unfairness and disadvantage.

We collect data on the protected characteristics of employees. We use this data to analyse if our policies, procedures, guidance or projects could have a negative impact on the groups they affect.

When we report this data, we will not use it in any way that will enable individuals to be identified, unless they have given permission for the data to be used in this way.

British Canoeing will:

- Collect equality information on the protected characteristics from job applicants on application to a new post and employed staff, assuring staff that this information will be kept confidential.
- Provide anonymised equality monitoring reports to the Board Subcommittee which will be used to identify any potential barriers in relation to recruitment, selection, learning and career development.
- Follow the principles of the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and the British Canoeing Employee and Key Volunteer Data Protection Policy.

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

The Human Resources team will be responsible for reviewing the Equality Policy as well as monitoring its effectiveness.

The policy's effectiveness can be measured through:

- Feedback from staff.
- Staff Survey feedback.
- Diversity monitoring data.
- Participation and engagement in equality, diversity and inclusion training.
- Exit interviews.

- Staff turnover rates.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure compliance with UK laws and regulations. Updates will be communicated to all staff members.

#### 14. Information and Support

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

For queries about this policy, or to report a breach of the policy terms, please contact [hradmin@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:hradmin@britishcanoeing.org.uk). All concerns raised regarding equality, diversity and inclusion will also be raised with British Canoeing's EDI Lead and Governance Team.

#### Appendix A – Definitions

##### Equality:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission defines equality as:

- Ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their life and talents.
- It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.
- Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination.

##### Equity:

- Equity recognises differences in individual circumstances and needs, and involves allocating specific or additional resources and support in order to ensure everyone can be treated fairly, and is an important tool in achieving equality.

##### Diversity:

- Means that everyone is unique and recognises, values and takes account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, needs and experiences.
- Encouraging and using those differences to create a cohesive community and effective workforce.

##### Inclusion:

- Strives to make every individual or group feel welcome, valued, accepted and respected.
- Creates an environment which meets the needs of people with different backgrounds allowing them to reach their full potential.

#### Appendix B – Definitions of Protected Characteristics

- **Age**  
Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year old).
- **Disability**  
A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- **Gender Reassignment**  
This is the process of transitioning from one gender to another. Under the Equality Act 2010, it is no longer necessary to be under medical care to be legally protected.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership**  
Marriage is legally defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity**  
Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a person unfavourably because they are breastfeeding. Protection from unfair treatment applies to both the pregnancy and in respect of any illness arising from the pregnancy
- **Race or Ethnicity**  
Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion or Belief**  
Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of religion or belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- **Gender**  
A man or a woman.
- **Sexual Orientation**  
Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission. Last updated: 06 Jul 2021  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

Full definitions of Protected Characteristics can be found in the [Equality Act 2010](#).

## Appendix C – Types of Unlawful Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 sets out protections for individuals against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. These protections apply to all staff; permanent, temporary and contractors. It also covers volunteers including advisory groups.

British Canoeing regards any form of unlawful discrimination as serious misconduct and any employee, volunteer or member who unlawfully discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action. Unlawful discrimination can take the following forms:

- **Direct Discrimination**  
Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

- **Indirect Discrimination**  
Occurs when a job requirement, condition, Policy or a practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by Association**  
This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by perception**  
When someone is treated unfairly because others believe they have a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment**  
Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.”  
The Equality Act prohibits three types of harassment. These are:
  - harassment related to a protected characteristic (age; disability; gender re-assignment; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation);
  - sexual harassment;
  - less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to, or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.
- **Bullying**  
Described as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair sanctions which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence, and which may cause them to suffer stress.
- **Victimisation**  
Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly or has suffered a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so.

Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Equality Policy November 2023