



Herts Disability Sports Foundation

Charity Number 1156034

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

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Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. King', written over a faint circular stamp.

Date 18th June 2025

(Signature of Chair)

Herts Disability Sports Foundation Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

1. Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the work of Herts Disability Sports Foundation (HDSF) as a key principle in our charitable objectives. As an employer, we are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination in order to create an environment where all employees and volunteers feel valued, respected and able to fully participate, regardless of their background or identity. As a charity providing services and/or goods to the public, we are committed to overcoming barriers to access and ensuring that our service users believe and feel that any and every individual is welcome.
2. The policy applies to all Trustees, staff, volunteers, users and general public who come into contact with HDSF.
3. This policy welcomes the statutory requirements laid down in the Equalities Act 2010, and reflects current guidance from ACAS and Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK).

Principles

4. The policy's key principles are:
 - a. To provide equality, fairness and respect for all, whether in temporary, part-time or full-time employment, or working as a volunteer.
 - b. To ensure we do not unlawfully discriminate against a person who has a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
 - c. To oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
 - d. To promote equality of opportunity and diversity in volunteering, employment and participation. As an employer of staff and volunteers, we aim to create an inclusive culture that makes every employee feel valued while also acknowledging their differences and how these differences contribute to the organization's culture and business outcomes.
 - e. HDSF recognises it is the behaviours and actions of our staff and volunteers (including Trustees) that creates an environment which is welcoming and 'safe'

for everyone. This policy aims to ensure that every level of the organisation actively contributes to creating this environment and we will actively seek feedback to learn and improve – to benefit staff at all levels, volunteers and service users.

Forms of discrimination

5. It is important that all members of HDSF understand what is considered as discrimination and the various forms that it can occur in:
 - a. Direct discrimination – when one employee or member is treated less favourably than another would be treated in the same circumstances, on the grounds mentioned at para 6.b.
 - b. Indirect discrimination – when a job requirement or condition is applied equally to all, but it has a detrimental effect on one group in society, as it is difficult for that group to comply with it (e.g., because of their religion).
 - c. Victimisation – when a person is treated less favourably than others because they have taken action under the Equality Act 2010.
 - d. Harassment – unwanted behaviour that either violates a person’s dignity or creates a threatening, unfriendly and humiliating environment for the person. It can occur through verbal or physical contact. It also includes third party sexual harassment.
 - e. Associative discrimination - where someone experiences discrimination because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic (for example, the parent of a disabled child).
 - f. Perceptive discrimination - where someone experiences discrimination because they’re perceived to have a protected characteristic.
 - g. Failure to make reasonable adjustments - where an organisation fails to remove or reduce the barriers someone faces at work because of a protected characteristic. Under the Equality Act, workplaces are legally required to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities.

Responsibilities of HDSF Employees and Volunteers (including Trustees)

6. The behaviour of staff and volunteers is crucial to the successful operation of this policy. All staff and volunteers should understand they can personally be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment and volunteering duties, against fellow employees, service users and the public.
7. All HDSF staff and volunteers should:
 - a. Comply with the policy and arrangements.
 - b. Inform the person in charge if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

- c. Not victimise, harass, or threaten other employees or service users on the grounds specified in this policy.
 - d. Not discriminate, nor encourage others to do so.
8. Any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, as described in section 7 is considered as gross misconduct and any employee who discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action. Similarly, any volunteer will have their position reviewed in terms of their behaviour and their volunteering opportunity.

Responsibilities of HDSF as an Employer

9. HDSF commits to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We will:
- a. Ensure all employees and volunteers working with HDSF are informed of the equality, diversity & inclusion policy and the reasons for having it in place.
 - b. Ensure all employees are advised of their rights and responsibilities under this policy.
 - c. Make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to an employee's learning or physical disability, including mental health conditions or neurodiversity. This could include finding a different way to do something or providing equipment, services or support. Reasonable adjustments will be specific to the individual and will take into account their views, the practicality of arrangements, the affordability and the health and safety of others.
 - d. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
 - e. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, service users and any others, in the course of the organisation's work activities.
 - f. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
 - g. Make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
 - h. Maintain records of discriminatory incidents.
 - i. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

HDSF will, wherever possible and practical, extend these commitments to volunteers.

Responsibilities of HDSF to Service Users

10. Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the work of HDSF as a key principle in our charitable objectives. We aim to ensure that both potential and current service users are not discriminated against in our working environment by staff, volunteers or members of the public. Further, we would want to ensure that our community believes that we value diversity and inclusion through our actions, behaviours and the way that HDSF presents itself publicly.
11. We will actively seek out the views of our service users to improve our current practices and make HDSF more inclusive. This will be an ongoing activity with the aim of continuous improvement.

Dealing with Discrimination

12. To protect an individual's rights under this policy, an employee who feels that they have suffered from unfair treatment, which is covered within this policy has the right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination, harassment or victimisation via the grievance procedures, as these issues are treated as disciplinary offences.
13. Any individual may report a grievance. As with most grievance procedures, the point of appeal is HDSF Trustees – full details can be found in the Grievance Policy.
14. Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.
15. The appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who violates this equality, diversity & inclusion policy and dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
16. Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
17. Any volunteer or service user (or their carer) who believes they have seen or experienced discriminatory behaviour should, ideally, speak with the lead instructor at the time. However, they may also raise a complaint using the HDSF complaints procedure (available on our website) to enable us to investigate and learn from the situation.