



EQUALITY POLICY

Promoting Fairness, Inclusion & Opportunity

Drafted: June 2021

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Review Due: June 2024

1. Introduction

Ulster Hockey is committed to being an *equal opportunities service provider*. This means that we will make good faith efforts to comply with the spirit and letter of the equality laws.

We will continually work to ensure that our members, volunteers and stakeholders will always be treated with dignity and respect in a harmonious environment that is open and welcoming to all.

We will not discriminate unlawfully against or harass any person on the grounds of :

Sex	Pregnancy or maternity	Gender reassignment
Racial group	Religious belief	Political opinion
Age¹	Sexual orientation	Disability

We will also work to ensure that our premises and the way in which we deliver hockey and other services do not unreasonably exclude or disadvantage those of our members or potential members who have disabilities. To this end we will comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments that is imposed on us in relation to such persons. We understand that an unjustified failure to comply with that duty would be an act of unlawful discrimination.

This policy is applicable to the game of hockey at all levels and in all roles.

2. Members, Volunteers and Stakeholders Rights

Our members, volunteers and stakeholders have a right to gain access to participate equally and fully in the sport of hockey, and to be treated by us in a way that is fair, open and welcoming and that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. They also have a right to complain about any treatment from us that falls below acceptable standards should it occur.

We have established a complaints procedure to deal with such complaints and we would encourage aggrieved persons to use it. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Our complaints procedure does not replace the right of aggrieved persons to also pursue complaints to a County Court.

Members, volunteers and stakeholders who make complaints of discrimination and harassment, and others who give evidence or information in connection with such

¹ Not lawfully required at present

complaints, will not be victimised (i.e. they will not be discriminated against or harassed in retaliation for their actions). Victimisation is also discrimination contrary to the equality laws and this policy.

3. Members, Volunteers and Stakeholders Responsibilities

We ask our members, volunteers and stakeholders to respect this policy and our efforts to implement it. Members should treat our employees and our other customers with dignity and respect. We will give serious consideration to sanctions against any members, volunteers and stakeholders, including expulsion from the sport from any members, volunteers or stakeholders who fail to do this.

4. Employees' Responsibilities

All our employees must comply with this policy. They must treat our members, volunteers and stakeholders with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment against any other person. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned. We will treat it as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment.

All our employees should discourage discrimination and harassment by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting members who suffer such treatment. Any employee who is aware of any breaches or potential breaches of this policy should alert the Executive Manager to enable us to deal with it. Should the issue relate to the Executive Manager, the employee should alert the Chair.

5. Our responsibilities

We will continually make good faith efforts to implement this policy. This responsibility will be carried out by *the* Executive Manager. We will:

- provide all employees with a copy of this policy and explain it to them at their induction training and other appropriate times.
- provide appropriate training to all employees who engage with members and stakeholders to prepare them to be able to deal effectively with breaches or potential breaches of this policy.
- Display a copy of this policy in a prominent place where members may read it.
- make copies of the policy available in alternative formats on request.

- ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially and in accordance with our complaints procedure.
- set a good example by treating all customers with fairness, dignity and respect.
- be alert to unacceptable behaviour and will take appropriate action to stop it.
- monitor all complaints and review the effectiveness of this policy periodically.
- develop an *equal opportunities action plan* and implement it.

6. Legal Requirements

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.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that most public bodies have a responsibility for promoting equality.

7. Definitions of Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

Discrimination can take the following forms:

- **Direct discrimination.** This means treating someone less favourably than you would treat others in the same circumstances;
- **Indirect discrimination.** This occurs when a requirement or condition is applied equally to all which has a disproportionate and detrimental affect on one sector of society because fewer from that sector can comply with it and the requirement cannot be justified in relation to the service.
- When decisions are made about an individual, the only personal characteristics taken into account will be those which, as well as being consistent with relevant legislation, are necessary to the proper performance of the work involved.

Harassment is described as appropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence to the recipient. It may be directed towards people because of their gender, appearance, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, sexual preference, a disability or some other characteristic. Ulster Hockey is committed to ensuring employees, members, participants and volunteers are able to conduct their activities free from harassment or intimidation.

Victimisation is defined as when someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against Ulster Hockey under one of the relevant ACTS/regulations (as previously outlined) or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

Ulster Hockey regards discrimination, harassment or victimisation, as described above, as serious misconduct and any employee, volunteer or member who discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action.

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