The English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) is the organisation responsible for the development and co-ordination of sport for disabled people in England.

We are committed to ensuring that all disabled people have the opportunity to take part in sport and physical activity and aim to be the voice of disability sport seeking to promote inclusion and achieve equality of sporting opportunities for disabled people.

This policy recognises that the 8.5 million disabled people in the UK, around 15% of the population (Disability Rights Commission, 2006) experience barriers, discrimination and a lack of opportunity when trying to access goods, services, education and employment in the sport and physical activity environment.

This policy also acknowledges that disabled people have different needs relating to:

- age
- gender
- sexual orientation
- culture
- race
- religion
- socio-economic status
- HIV status

Disabled people can face greater barriers when they identify with any combination of these factors.

The EFDS will:

- challenge discrimination and harassment in sport against disabled people
- promote equal opportunities for disabled people
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage disabled people to participate fully in the sport and physical activity environment.
- not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment.
- continue to develop a positive public profile of disabled people helping to counteract any stereotypes which may lead to the exclusion of disabled people from decision making.

The EFDS sets out its arrangements to promote equality for disabled people in its Equality Action Plan.

**The Social Model of Disability**

EFDS recognises that disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activity.
Impairment is the functional limitation of the body, sensory impairment, learning disability and/or people experiencing mental distress.

**Empowerment**
EFDS is committed to the empowerment of disabled people and seeks to empower disabled people so that they are involved in all aspects of the EFDS and its work.

**Exemptions**
The EFDS reserves the right to limit competitions to disabled people of specific age, gender or disability classification where it is necessary to ensure equitable, safe and equal competition.

**Employment and Staffing**
Board Members and all staff accept their personal responsibility in the practical application of this Policy and will be encouraged to:

- Overcome their own prejudices.
- Respect difference and treat people with fairness and dignity.
- Ensure none of their practices and procedures related to the organisation are discriminatory.
- Actively encourage *inclusion* in the work that they do.

**Positive Action**
Where there is proven justification through robust research and data collection EFDS will take positive action to increase the numbers of any individuals or groups which are currently under represented in the organisation.

The EFDS is committed to a policy of equal opportunities in employment. This policy aims to ensure that no employee or job applicant is:

(i) Directly or indirectly discriminated against on the grounds of disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, gender, age, HIV status, mental health, political or religious belief, or social background.

(ii) Disadvantaged by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justified.

Disciplinary cases and grievances are carried out in accordance with the EFDS Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and those staff involved in hearing such cases are appropriately trained and/or experienced.

Discriminatory language and behaviour which offends or threatens colleagues or customers is not tolerated. Where it is necessary, action to deal with such instances will be taken under the EFDS Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.
**Service Delivery**

The EFDS is committed to achieving equality in its service provision. This means the development of a service from which discrimination and prejudice have been eliminated so that the EFDS can respond fully to the needs of existing and potential service users. At national and regional level the EFDS will regularly review composition of the EFDS Board and Management Committees and will work to ensure they reflect the interests of communities served.

The EFDS through its agreed strategic objectives and Equality Action Plan will continue to promote and develop equality throughout the organisation.

The EFDS acknowledges its’ role in encouraging and supporting other voluntary or statutory agencies to develop a policy and practice around equality and inclusion.

**Implementation**

On a day to day basis it is the responsibility of line managers and all members of staff to monitor the effectiveness and the implementation of the policy, the ultimate responsibility residing with the Chief Executive.

Overall responsibility for the policy's implementation and development will be that of the EFDS's National Council (Board of Directors/Trustees)

The Policy will be subject to regular monitoring and review by the EFDS’ Board of Directors/Trustees.

**Legal Obligations**

The EFDS through this policy recognises its legal obligations in relation to the following acts of Parliament:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Employment Act 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, 2005
- Race Relations Act 1976(Amendment 2000)
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Equality Bill 2006
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
Monitoring and Evaluation

The Equality Policy will continue to be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is kept relevant and up to date. Key information on important aspects of employment and service delivery will continue to be collated and analysed to obtain a detailed understanding of how policies and practices are working towards creating equality of opportunity.

Definitions

The EFDS derives the following definitions which appear in this policy statement from the relevant equal opportunities legislation; it is these conditions that the Equality Policy and the Equality Action Plan are designed to overcome:

**Direct discrimination**: when a person or group is treated less favourably directly because of a personal characteristic, such as race, gender, disability, religion, age or sexual orientation.

Direct discrimination is unlawful. If direct discrimination happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation.

**Indirect discrimination**: where a criterion, policy, procedure, practice or condition which applies equally to everyone has the effect of disadvantaging people from a particular group and cannot be justified.

Indirect discrimination is unlawful. If indirect discrimination happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation.

**Institutional discrimination**: is where, for example, an organisation's processes, procedures, attitudes, behaviours or organisational structures, through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping, amount to less favourable treatment.

Institutional discrimination is unlawful. If institutional discrimination happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation.

**Harassment**: is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard to all the circumstances and the perception of the victim; harassment can include behaviour that is offensive, frightening or in any way distressing. It may be intentional bullying which is obvious or violent, but it can also be unintentional or subtle and insidious. It may involve behaviour which may not be intended to be malicious but nevertheless is upsetting. It may be about the individual's personal identity or it may be about the identity of those with whom the individual associates. It may not be targeted at an individual(s)
but consist of a general culture.

Harassment is unlawful. If harassment happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation.

**Victimisation:** is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

Victimisation is unlawful. If victimisation happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation.

---

**Race Equality Statement and Policy**

Throughout this statement the term ‘ethnic minority’ is used to refer to Black people and all those who may not identify themselves as Black but who share the same experience of racism, discrimination and inequality in employment and service provision and as a result, suffer significant inequality.

In recognition of such the EFDS has made a firm commitment to:

- redress any imbalance that may exist in the racial composition of its workforce
- ensuring that irrespective of racial origin, all disabled people have equal access to sport and physical activity
- ensuring that irrespective of racial origin, all people are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

In discharging its responsibilities the EFDS will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of race
- promote equal opportunities for people from all racial backgrounds.
- promote good relations between people of different racial backgrounds.

Racial harassment and victimisation are real issues for any employer and service provider, including EFDS. The EFDS will encourage and create an environment in which its workforce (and especially the general public) can feel confident in reporting incidents of racial harassment and victimisation, in full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively in accordance with the EFDS Grievance procedures and Race Relations Legislation.

The EFDS will seek to ensure that communications are accessible to all people by (for example, providing translation and interpreting facilities), producing key communications in community languages when appropriate and electronically.
The EFDS will not tolerate racial harassment or discrimination.

**Sexual Orientation/ Transgender Equality Statement And Policy**

The EFDS acknowledges that Homophobia is a collection of negative attitudes and prejudices that leads to discrimination against

- bi-sexual people
- lesbians,
- gay men,
- transgender community.

The EFDS will seek to;

- help staff recognise that discrimination can take place both in service delivery and employment because of a person's sexual orientation
- ensure that wherever within our power, service conditions of employees offer the same benefits to same-sex relationships as heterosexual relationships, including pensions, special and parenting leave
- create a climate of respect and tolerance in the workplace where all people feel safe and secure with regard to their sexual orientation.
- work in partnership with other organisations to combat sexual harassment, homophobia and transphobia - taking preventative action where practical and prosecute if necessary
- consult with, and monitor, the needs of lesbian, gay men, and bisexual and transgendered staff, service users and non service users.

The EFDS has acknowledged that transgendered people have a genuine medical status and will seek to:

- treat transgendered people with respect and dignity
- strive to remove any barriers to services and employment opportunities
- consult with transgendered people to ensure we are aware of their changing needs in relation to service provision by and on behalf of the EFDS.

The EFDS will not tolerate harassment and discrimination on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation/ gender identity.

The EFDS sets out its arrangements to promote equal opportunities to lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people (LGBT) in its Equality Action Plan.

**Gender Equality Statement and Policy**

The EFDS acknowledges that discrimination can lead to (if not managed) inequality in access to; jobs, training, development and services. As an employer and provider of services, the EFDS will continue to promote and champion equality for all employees, disabled people and other partners.
The EFDS recognises that important differences can exist between different women and that continued attention will be given to the specific needs of all women, black women, women from other ethnic groups, disabled women, lesbians, carers, older women and single parents.

The EFDS acknowledges that women can be under-represented in the workforce (at senior levels) if not managed and has made a commitment to seek to redress any imbalance. The contribution of women at all levels is vital and the EFDS will endeavour to make full use of their skills, experience, knowledge and perspective.

The threat (and use) of social and domestic violence against women can limit choices and aspirations. The effect can be to reduce women’s full participation in everyday life. In accepting its role as an employer and provider of services, the EFDS will promote awareness and encourage programmes designed to reduce its incidence.

The EFDS recognises that women form around 50% of the population and is committed to promoting good practice and removing barriers which may prevent women from engaging fully with, and making full use of, our services.

The EFDS will continue to;
• take action to ensure that any discriminatory barriers are removed and we will monitor, review and evaluate the results of our actions
• work to create equal access to jobs, training, development and services
• recognise that caring and domestic responsibilities are often traditionally held by women.
• support the fact that both women and men may need to work flexibly or part-time or take a break to meet their caring responsibilities
• support employees (as far as practicable) to care for others who depend on them in emergency and other situations (whatever their gender).
• create an environment where managers recognise the needs of employees in relation to workplace gender issues, for example, where employees may be isolated in single sex dominated workplaces we will ensure the culture is not one of harassment and discrimination
• work in partnership with other organisations to combat sexual harassment and domestic violence.

The EFDS will not tolerate sexual harassment or discrimination.

**Equality Statement and Policy on Religion and Belief**

The EFDS acknowledges that to hold a religious (or other belief) is a basic human right that should be treated with respect and tolerance. It also acknowledges that people can experience harassment, discrimination or differential treatment because of religious beliefs that they may hold.

The EFDS recognises that a workforce with diverse religious beliefs will have a greater understanding of the needs of service users with similar diverse needs and welcome a workforce that reflects the communities it serves.
The EFDS will continue to;

- inform staff of the need to be tolerant and understand others’ religions and beliefs
- within our flexible working practices, provide scope for prayer and reflection and reasonable unpaid time off for festivals that are a part of a person’s religion or belief.
- ensure sensitivity and respect to service users’ faith and avoid service delivery that is offensive to people’s beliefs
- welcome different forms of dress according to cultural and religious backgrounds balanced with the need to provide a safe and customer-focused place of work.
- promote an inclusive working culture where people can practice their religion or belief safely and without fear of harassment and discrimination.

The EFDS will not tolerate religious harassment or discrimination.

**Equality Statement and Policy on Age**

The EFDS acknowledges that negative assumptions can be made about people because of their age. Young people and older people can be affected by such assumptions. These attitudes can become built into organisations and shown in their policies and practices.

The EFDS recognises that young people are essential to bring fresh perspectives and ideas and to replenish the workforce over time. That older people have a wealth of valuable skills, expertise, knowledge and experience, all of which are essential to a balanced workforce.

The EFDS will continue to;

- promote recognition of the fact that ageism is harmful as it undervalues the contribution that young and older people can make.
- consult carefully with young and older people to ensure we meet their needs
- if necessary, in employment, we will take action to recruit and retain younger and older people to ensure a workforce age balance and to ensure we retain the valuable range of skills and experience that a balanced workforce brings
- constantly review and adapt our policies and procedures to ensure they are not ageist.

The EFDS will not tolerate harassment and discrimination on the grounds of a person’s age.