



## **Durham Women FC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

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### **Introduction**

At Durham Women Football Club and Durham Women Football Club Academy (together 'the Club') we are committed to providing the best experience for employees, players and supporters as possible. Being part of our local community is very important to us, and to that end we are passionate at reducing and eliminating discrimination at all levels of our fan base, partners, players and employees.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, players, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers and casual workers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

### **Scope**

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues, players, visitors and supporters with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, players, visitors or supporters regardless of their status.

### **Legal Obligations**

The Club is committed to avoiding and eliminating discrimination of any kind and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The Club takes a zero-tolerance approach to intimidation, harassment, victimisation, bullying, abuse and hate crime.

### **Policy Details**

We are unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination being applied against staff members and players, or anyone who uses or attends our sessions or games on the grounds of the following protected characteristics:

- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Transgender reassignment
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marital/civil partner status
- Disability
- Age
- Pregnancy / maternity

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat supporters, visitors, suppliers and former staff members. This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment. We will take every possible step to ensure that staff members are treated fairly and that decisions on all aspects of employment (including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career management, retirement and so on) are based solely on an individual's skills, qualities and needs. Every staff member has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Appropriate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, will be taken against any staff member, of whatever seniority, who contravenes this policy.



Definitions:

**Equality and Diversity** is about creating environments which encourage individuals to achieve their full potential and about challenging myths and stereotypes. It is not about treating everyone the same. It is about treating everyone according to their own individual needs and is essential to good working practice

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

**Direct Discrimination** occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

**Indirect Discrimination** occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

**Victimisation** is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

Harassment and bullying related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Examples of harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse
- Offensive jokes, pranks or songs
- Lewd or suggestive comments
- Requests for sexual favours
- Verbally or physically threatening behaviour
- Abusing power or using unfair penal sanctions
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property
- Ostracising or excluding colleagues from work events or social activities
- Displaying inflammatory or abusive literature or graffiti
- Using e-mail or the internet for the purpose of bullying or making abusive or offensive remarks

## **Safeguarding and Inclusion**

Durham Women FC recognises that safeguarding and equality are closely linked. We are committed to creating an environment where every individual feels safe, respected and able to participate free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, abuse or victimisation.

The Club is committed to promoting the welfare of young people and adults at risk and to ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of everyone involved in the Club.



We will:

- Foster a culture of respect, dignity and inclusion where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Ensure safeguarding policies, procedures and reporting processes are fair, accessible and inclusive for all individuals, regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or socio-economic background.
- Take all concerns relating to safeguarding, discrimination, bullying, harassment or abuse seriously and respond promptly in accordance with Club policies and The FA safeguarding procedures.
- Provide safeguarding training and awareness to staff, volunteers and coaches that promotes inclusive practice and recognises the additional barriers or vulnerabilities some individuals may experience.
- Work to remove barriers to participation and ensure that everyone can engage in football within a safe, welcoming and supportive environment.

Durham Women FC has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any behaviour that compromises the safety, wellbeing or dignity of others. All safeguarding concerns will be managed confidentially and appropriately in line with the Club's Safeguarding Policy and relevant legislation.

### **Important Information**

Bullying and harassment does not include appropriately conducted criticism of a member of staff's behaviour or job performance by relevant people. A staff member may be bullied or harassed by a colleague or subordinate as well as by a manager or supervisor. It is also important to recognise that what one staff member may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable and that the essence of harassment and bullying is that the words or behaviour are unwelcome to the particular person who is the target of the words or behaviour.

All staff members must treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity. Staff should be aware that as well as committing a disciplinary offence, an individual found by an employment tribunal to have harassed a fellow employee in the course of their employment may be personally liable to compensate the victim. In addition, harassment for whatever reason may constitute a crime punishable by imprisonment or a fine.

### **Commitment**

The Club promotes equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion across all business areas, employees, volunteers and stakeholders. The Club is committed to:

- Challenging discrimination and stereotyping, prejudice and assumptions
- Promoting and respecting diversity
- Offering a safe environment
- Offering training for staff and volunteers
- Providing positive role models
- Displaying positive publicity
- Staff are aware of their personal obligations to avoid discrimination in accordance with this Equality and Diversity Policy.
- No player, supporter or staff member is treated less favourably than another in accordance with this policy.



- No player, supporter or staff member is placed at a disadvantage by requirements, conditions or procedures which have a disproportionately adverse effect on them and cannot be shown to be necessary for the satisfactory completion of the job or activity.

### **Breaches of this policy**

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Complaints Procedure. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure. Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Behaviour and language contrary to the spirit of this policy will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

### **Responsibilities**

Overall responsibility for ensuring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion standards are maintained and the strategy and action plan are up to date, ratified and utilised lies with the General Manager.

Other managers are responsible for ensuring knowledge and training is passed to all employees within the wider team.

The Club will ensure that staff are made aware of the provisions of this policy and of their personal responsibilities by bringing these responsibilities to their attention on induction and in regularly training sessions etc. Any incidents of discrimination and/or harassment will be fully investigated. All staff have a responsibility to co-operate with and adopt the requirements of this policy, so as to develop and maintain a working environment in which harassment and bullying are understood by all to be unacceptable. It is fully expected that all staff will act responsibly regarding this issue.