

How to Create an Equality Policy Issued, June 2011

This 'How to guide' is part of a toolkit that also includes:

- A Guidance Note on the Equality Act;
- A Factsheet of Frequently Asked Questions;
- An example, Equality Act compliant 'Equality Policy'

Please note this 'How to Guide' offers an interpretation on current legislation and general advice. It should not replace bespoke legal advice.

Special thanks to Vaga Associates for creating this guide for Sport and Recreation Alliance members.



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Why should you create a policy?

A policy is a commitment by your organisation to work to a set of principles and objectives. All organisations will have policies that cover a wide range of subjects. These will guide and inform the work of everyone in the organisation. Having an equality policy means that you have made a commitment to act in ways that prevent and tackle unfair treatment or unlawful discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, and that you openly promote equality. The policy will spell out your understanding of the issues, how they affect your organisation, and what commitments you intend to make. By having an equality policy that covers all sectors of society, you are making a powerful statement of intent, and committing your organisation to further action. A good policy will show your members and staff that you expect them to be serious about preventing and tackling inequality. The policy will also show your commitment to potential participants, staff, volunteers and funding agencies.

Communicating the policy

Writing a policy is only the first step. If people don't know about the policy then it becomes another set of papers left on a shelf in your office. Any policy you write should be formally approved at the highest level through your organisation's decision-making process. The policy should then be communicated to everyone involved in your organisation and publicised as widely as possible. Make sure the policy is in the members' handbook, for example, or posted on your website or in your newsletter. If you are the Governing Body of a sport, ensure the policy is communicated throughout the organisation, including regional networks, clubs, officials and coaches.

Using the policy

Any policy you approve must be used to inform every aspect of your work. Staff and volunteers need to be trained to integrate it into their activities; recruitment and selection should be guided by the policy; the policy should be linked to your complaints and disciplinary procedures; and the policy should be used to write an action plan.

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Writing an action plan

A policy is only a public commitment to act in a certain way; a set of principles to which you expect people involved in your organisation to adhere. You must ensure that the policy is used to draw up an equality action plan, with clear objectives and targets, based on the principles laid out in your policy. The equality action plan can either be a stand-alone document or a section in the organisation's wider delivery plan. Where it is a stand-alone document, you may wish to make reference to it, or specific actions within it, in the wider delivery plan.

Legislation

Any equality policy should refer to the current equality and human rights legislation and the way in which that legislation affects and informs the working practices of your organisation.

A framework for a practical policy

Any policy you write must be clear, easy to follow and unambiguous. Consult the relevant equality organisations for advice on terminology and phrasing. For example, the Equality and Human Rights Commission or Sporting Equals use the term 'people from ethnic minority communities' or 'ethnic minorities', but some organisations prefer 'black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.'

A good policy will be split into these sections:

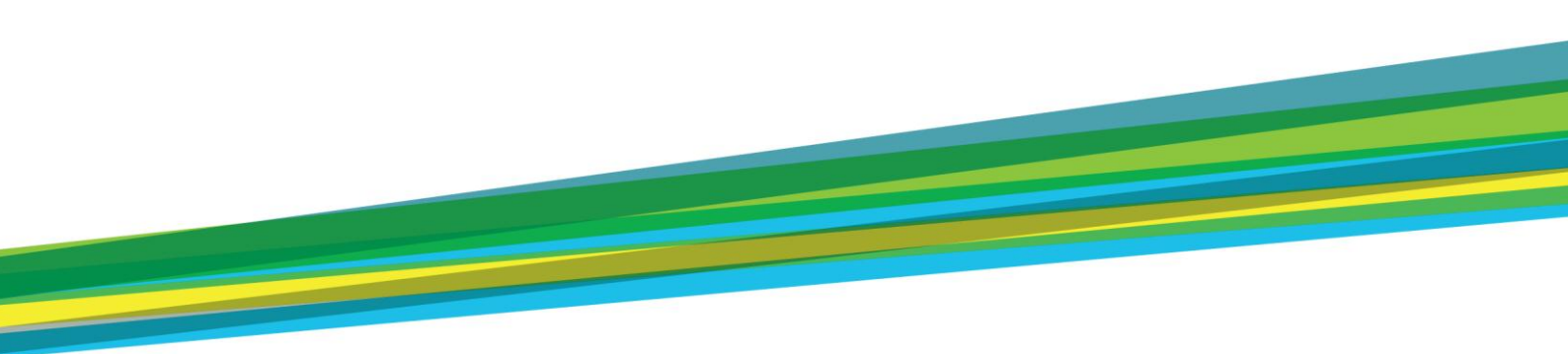
1. **A statement of intent or set of objectives:** spell out your commitment to equality in terms of opportunity and access, and your commitment to prevent/tackle discrimination.
2. **A purpose: explain why you are writing and adopting the policy.** You may wish to refer to and recognise issues of discrimination in sport in general or refer to any specific research related to your organisation.

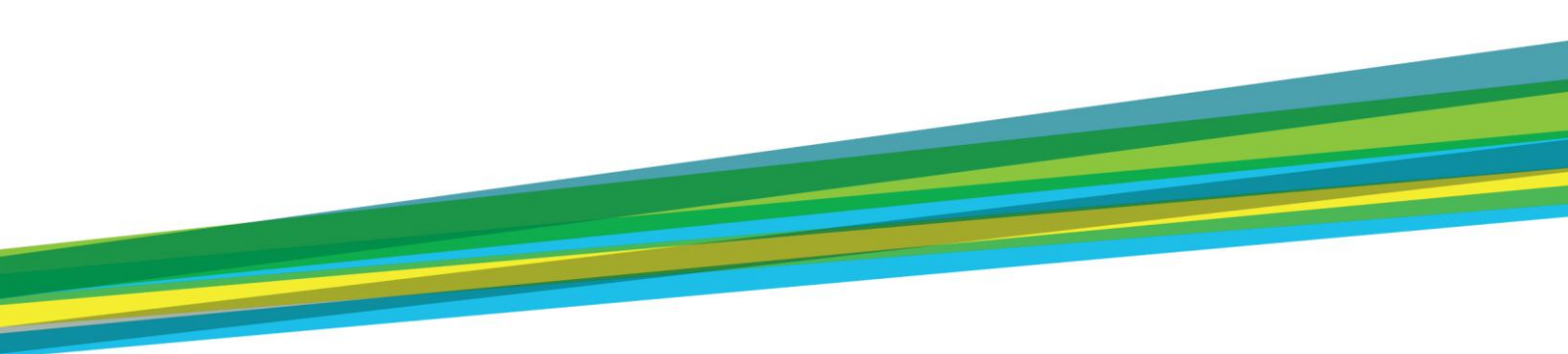
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3. **A review of the legal requirements:** all organisations are affected by specific equality legislation. You need to describe how this legislation relates to your work and what steps you intend to take to ensure you meet the appropriate legal requirements.
 4. **Discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation:** your policy needs to define direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation, all of which need to be tackled in your policy through statements committing the organisation to action. These statements should refer unambiguously to sanctions in your complaints and disciplinary procedure. You may also wish to refer to the obligation to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities.
 5. **Responsibility, implementation and communication:** you need to show who is responsible for the policy as a whole and each individual element within it. You need to explain how the policy will be implemented at a corporate level, and how it will be communicated to all staff, members, volunteers, participants and clubs, as appropriate.
 6. **A commitment to action:** you need to list what steps you will take to ensure that your intentions and purpose are reflected in the way your organisation plans action, makes decisions, recruits staff, delivers services and supports members. You should make a statement about positive action to tackle under-representation in this section.
 7. **Monitoring and evaluation:** you need to describe how the policy will be monitored and evaluated, and who will be responsible for that work. You need to state how long the policy will be in existence and when it will be subject to review.
 8. **Grievance and disciplinary procedures:** this section will draw together elements of the other sections and relate them directly to your grievance and disciplinary procedures. Make clear how grievances and disciplinary action can be triggered by actions contrary to the policy, how appeals can be made, who is responsible, and how matters are resolved.
 9. **An action plan:** you need to write an action plan. Include objectives with clear targets, stating who is responsible for each objective, what



resources are in place, when each target will be met and what evidence you can provide to show the targets have been met.

How to promote equality

The following is a ten point plan to help employers promote equality of opportunity in their organisations. These are guidance points only, and we strongly advise employers to seek further details about each of the areas listed below.

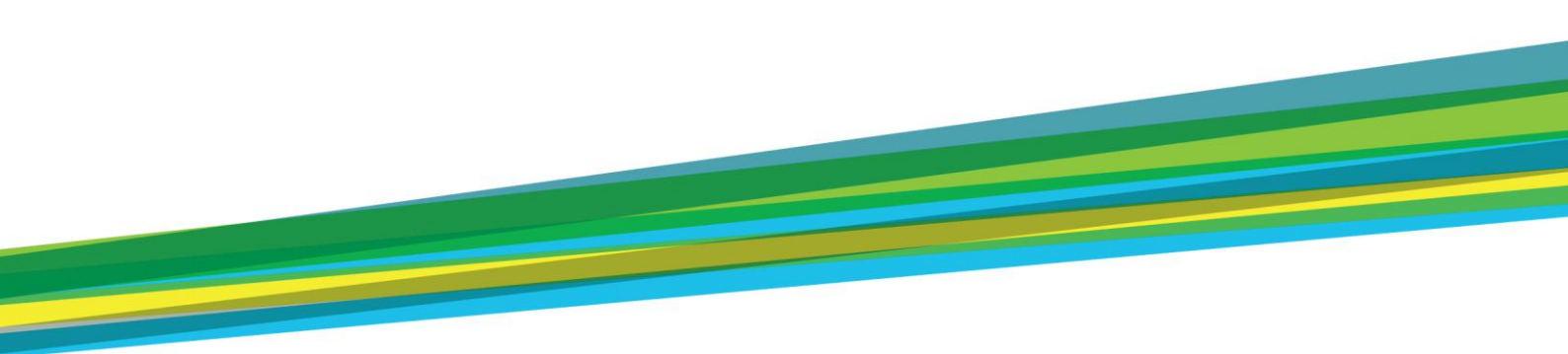
1. **Develop an equal opportunities policy**, covering all aspects relating to human resources including: recruitment and selection, promotion, training, grievance and disciplinary. You may wish to have a separate policy or you could ensure that your Equality Policy covers all of the areas relevant to employees.
2. **Set an action plan** with targets, so that you and your staff have a clear idea of what is to be achieved and by when.
3. **Provide training** for all people, including managers, throughout your organisation, to ensure they understand the importance of equal opportunities. Provide additional training for staff who recruit, select and train your employees.
4. **Assess the present position** to establish your starting point, and monitor progress in achieving your objectives.
5. **Review all human resources procedures** regularly to ensure that you are delivering on your policy.
6. **Draw up clear and justifiable job criteria**, which are demonstrably objective and job-related.
7. **Consider where and in what format vacancies are advertised** and whether they are likely to be accessible to sectors of society that are underrepresented in your workforce.

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8. **Consider your organisation's image:** do you feature women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities in recruitment literature, or could you be seen as an employer who is indifferent to these groups?
 9. **Consider flexible working,** career breaks, providing childcare facilities, and so on, to help parents and carers in particular meet domestic responsibilities and pursue their careers; and consider providing special equipment and assistance to help people with disabilities.
 10. **Develop links with local community groups,** organisations and schools, in order to reach a wider pool of potential applicants.