



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Foreword

Sports Equality is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It involves changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to all members of society and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy their sport, use their talents, and realise their full potential.

Bowls Scotland will work with members to provide all communities throughout the country with the opportunity to take part in lawn bowls and will ensure that the sport is managed and delivered fairly. Bowls Scotland recognises that inequalities exist within sport and that an unequal distribution of effort, and the use of 'positive action' is sometimes required to reach the most disadvantaged or excluded groups.

Bowls Scotland is fully committed to the principles laid down in this policy document and will ensure that all staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity, and respect the rights of all individuals wishing to participate in bowls in Scotland.

William Knox
Chair, Bowls Scotland

Policy Statement

Bowls Scotland endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved within bowls in Scotland, whether as a player, volunteer, official, coach or office-bearer in a club has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

In addition Bowls Scotland will:

- ensure that within all environments under the direct control of the national governing body an individual's rights, dignity and individual worth is respected, and in particular they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse; and
- support member clubs to ensure they provide an environment in which the rights, dignity and individual worth of an individual are respected, and in particular they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal obligations

Bowls Scotland is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind within bowls in Scotland, and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to harassment. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Appendix.

Positive action

The principle of Sports Equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It entails taking positive steps to counteract the effects of physical or cultural barriers – whether real or perceived – that restrict the opportunity for all sections of the community to participate equally and fully.

Bowls Scotland will therefore seek to institute, support and contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to bowls and participation in associated activities by people from any group that is under-represented in the sport or has difficulty accessing it.

Implementation

The following steps will be taken to publicise this policy and promote sports equality in bowls in Scotland:-

- A copy of this document will be published on the Bowls Scotland Website.
- The Bowls Scotland Director of Governance will take overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy is observed.
- The Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to the activities of Bowls Scotland.
- Bowls Scotland will collaborate fully with any surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in bowls and will take account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance sports equality in bowling.
- Bowls Scotland will provide access to training for all of its Board Members to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities.
- Bowls Scotland will make available to all member clubs a copy of their Equality & Diversity Policy and will encourage them to implement their own internal policy.

- It will be a condition of Bowls Scotland membership that member clubs:
 - take steps to ensure that their Committees, members and volunteers behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Club's constitution;
 - ensure that access to membership is open and inclusive; and
 - where possible, support such measures and initiatives that Bowls Scotland may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.
- It will be a condition of Bowls Scotland membership that affiliated associations:-
 - commit to act in accordance with this policy; and
 - where possible, support such measures and initiatives that Bowls Scotland may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

The appropriate sub-committee, Chaired by the Director of Governance, will review all Bowls Scotland activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy on an annual basis, and the Director of Governance will report formally on this issue in the Bowls Scotland Annual Report.

The Director of Governance, will review any measures or initiatives that Bowls Scotland may institute or take part in to promote and enhance sports equality in bowling, and will report their findings in the Bowls Scotland Annual Report.

The Board will review the policy itself at intervals of no more than three years, (or when necessary due to changes in legislation).

Complaints and compliance

Bowls Scotland regards all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is committed to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Any person, who believes that he or she has been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by a member club, individual member or affiliated association, should first raise their concerns to that person or organisation. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against Bowls Scotland itself, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the CEO.

The CEO will appoint an appropriate person to investigate the concern and they will work with all parties involved to reach an amicable solution. Bowls Scotland will consult the Equality and Human Rights Commission when appropriate to seek expert advice.

In the event that an individual or organisation associated with Bowls Scotland is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the Bowls Scotland Board will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action in relation to the matter concerned. The Board may impose sanctions on that individual or organisation in line with Bowls Scotland Equality & Diversity Policy. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the Board will consider the severity of the matter and take account of any mitigating circumstances.

**Bowls Scotland – Board of Directors
March 2015**

APPENDIX – Relevant legislation and forms of unacceptable discrimination

Legal rights

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 Great Britain and came into force in October 2010.

Discrimination refers to unfavourable treatment on the basis of particular characteristics, which are known as the 'protected characteristics'. Under the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristics are defined as age (employment only until 2012), disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status (employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on grounds of' a protected characteristic¹. This means that individuals will be protected if they have a characteristic, are assumed to have it, associate with someone who has it or with someone who is assumed to have it.

Forms of discrimination and discriminatory behaviour include the following:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination can be described as less favourable treatment on the grounds of one of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to an individual or group that would put persons of a particular characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons.

Discrimination arising from disability

When a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified, this is unlawful. This type of discrimination only relates to disability.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or which creates an intimidating or hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Victimisation

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because he or she has made allegations or brought proceedings under the anti-discrimination legislation, or because they have helped another person to do so. To do so would constitute victimisation.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as a form of personal harassment involving the misuse of power, influence or position to persistently criticise, humiliate or undermine an individual.

¹ The exception to this is pregnancy and maternity, which does not include protection by association or assumption – a woman is only protected from discrimination on grounds of her own pregnancy.