

BF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Last Updated: 22nd September 2017

Last Approved by Board: 25th June 2026

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 British Fencing ("BF") is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and is responsible for ensuring that no job applicant, BF Employee, volunteer or member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (together the 'Protected Characteristics')
- 1.2 BF recognises that we live in a diverse society and will be responsible for ensuring that there is open access to all those who wish to participate in all aspects of BF activities and that everyone is treated fairly.
- 1.3 BF will encourage partner organisations, including member clubs, to adopt, apply and demonstrate their commitment to the principles of equality.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS EQUALITY POLICY ("EP")

- 2.1 BF recognises that individuals (and/or certain sections of the community) may have been affected by discrimination in the past and may have been denied the opportunity to participate equally and fully in our society as a whole.
- 2.2 This EP has been produced to prevent and tackle any discrimination, or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect that may preclude some people from participating fully in BF Activities.

3. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 BF is required by law not to discriminate and recognises its legal obligations under, and will abide by the requirements of, the following:
 - Equal Pay Act 1970
 - Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
 - Sex Discrimination Acts 1975, 1986 & 1999

- Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
 - Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003.
 - Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006;
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Gender Recognition Act 2004;
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Any later amendments to the above Acts/regulations, or future including any equivalent legislation (as amended) in any UK jurisdiction, any later amendments to the above and to any equivalent legislation in any UK jurisdiction and any other existing or subsequent legislation that may be relevant to BF.
- 3.2 BF will seek relevant and appropriate advice each time this EP is reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect the current legal framework and good practice.

4. DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

BF recognises the following:

4.1 Discrimination can take the following forms:

- 4.1.1 Direct Discrimination - treating someone less favourably than you would treat others in the same circumstances;
- 4.1.2 Indirect Discrimination - imposing requirements or conditions that appear to apply equally to all but which, in practice can disadvantage certain sections of the population. Such requirements or conditions are lawful only if they can be objectively justified;
- 4.1.3 Harassment - inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence to the recipient. Harassment is unlawful if directed towards people because of their sex, gender reassignment status, race, ethnic origin, nationality, age, sexual orientation, disability or religion or belief, or if the conduct is of a sexual nature. BF is committed to ensuring that BF Employees, BF members and volunteers are able to conduct their activities free from harassment or intimidation;
- 4.1.4 Bullying - a form of personal harassment. It is the misuse of power, or position, to persistently unjustifiably criticise, humiliate and/or undermine an individual's confidence; and
- 4.1.5 Victimisation - when someone is treated less favourably than others because it is known or suspected that he or she has taken action against BF under the discrimination legislation (as previously outlined at 3.1 above) or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

- 4.2 BF regards discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, as described above, as serious misconduct. All complaints made under clause 7 below will be taken seriously and appropriate disciplinary action may be brought against any BF Employee, volunteer or member who discriminates against, harasses, bullies or victimises any other person.
- 4.3 When any decision is made about any individual, the only personal characteristics that may be taken into account are those that are consistent with any relevant legislation and are relevant to the substance of the decision being made.

5. RESPONSIBILITY, IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 5.1 The following responsibilities will apply:
 - 5.1.1 The Board is responsible for ensuring that this EP is implemented, followed and reviewed when appropriate. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that this EP is enforced and any breaches are dealt with.
 - 5.1.2 The Chair of the Board supported by the CEO will ensure that equality is included as an agenda item at Board meetings when appropriate and that the Board takes equality issues into consideration when making decisions.
 - 5.1.3 The CEO has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this EP.
 - 5.1.4 A BF Employee, designated by the CEO, has the day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this EP and for achieving any equality related actions resulting from this. The BF Employee's work programme will be amended to reflect this.
 - 5.1.5 All BF Employees, volunteers and members have the responsibility to respect, follow and promote the spirit and intentions of this EP. BF Employees' individual work programmes will be amended to include equality related tasks, where appropriate.
- 5.2 This EP will be implemented immediately following Board approval. Implementation requires the following actions:
 - 5.2.1 BF will regularly review its employment practices to ensure their continuing compliance with the relevant legislation. All recruitment material will include a link to BF's Equality policy statements
 - 5.2.2 No job applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute unfair discrimination: This provision will equally apply to any selection process for consultants, advisers and suppliers to BF
 - 5.2.3 Consultants and advisers (and where appropriate suppliers) to BF will be required to abide by this EP. This EP will be referred to in any service level agreements or contracts issued by BF

- 5.2.4 BF will produce, maintain and monitor an action plan to ensure the objectives of this EP are consistently delivered throughout all areas of the organisation: and
- 5.2.5 BF recognises that, in some cases, to further the principle of equality, unequal effort and resource may be required. If appropriate and proportionate, BF will consider positive action or introduce special measures to assist any group which is currently underrepresented in its membership, as BF Employees, as volunteers or in BF Activities.
- 5.3 This EP will be communicated in the following ways:
 - 5.3.1 This EP will be part of any employee handbook (or equivalent paper or electronic document). This EP is for guidance only and will not form part of any contract of employment with any BF Employee. Reference will be made to this EP in any code of conduct.
 - 5.3.2 This EP will be covered in the induction of all BF Employees. Evidence that it has been read and understood by the individual receiving the training is required to be kept.
 - 5.3.3 A copy of this EP will be publicly available on the BF website and copies in other formats can be requested from BF HQ (enquiries@britishfencing.com). All members will be made aware of this EP's existence when they join. A notice and explanation of any revisions to this EP will be published on BF's website and volunteers will be consulted. Following the consultation process a notice of the changes made will be publicly available. .
 - 5.3.4 BF will promote continuing personal development for all BF Employees and volunteers to support equal opportunities within the organisation and, where appropriate provide specialist facilities, equipment or training.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 6.1 This EP will remain in force until it is amended, replaced or withdrawn. A review of this EP will take place as and when required but not less than once every three years.
- 6.2 The equality action plan, created to ensure the intent of this EP is delivered, will be reviewed by the CEO and the BF Employee with the responsibility for its implementation regularly, but in any event not less than once every 12 months.
- 6.3 On an annual basis, statistical and, if appropriate qualitative, information will be produced by the CEO for the Board, and will be published internally and externally, to show the impact of this EP.

7. DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND OTHER COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 To safeguard individual rights under this EP, any BF Employee, volunteer, member or job applicant who believes they have suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of this EP, may raise the matter through the appropriate procedure.
- 7.2 Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any BF Employee, volunteer or member who violates this EP.
- 7.3 An individual raising a grievance will not be penalised for doing so unless it is untrue and not made in good faith.
- 7.4 As with all grievance procedures, the final point of appeal relating to this EP is the Board appeals committee.
- 7.5 Non-employment related complaints regarding this EP should be addressed to the BF Disciplinary Committee c/o the CEO or any other person specified on the BF website to be the main point of contact for the BF Disciplinary Committee.

8. DEFINITIONS

In this EP the following words have the following meanings:

"BF Activities": without limitation, all activities of BF Employees in the normal course of their employment; any fencing competition whether domestic or international organised centrally by BF; any fencing competition that appears on the BF competitions calendar or that benefits from BF insurance cover; any training session or camp, whether for fencing or otherwise, organised centrally by BF; activities of BF member clubs; activities of BF members when engaged in fencing related activities or when representing BF or the sport of fencing in the UK; coaching sessions run by BF registered coaches, or coaches operating under BF insurance or that of an associate body; any BF organised trip whether within the UK or abroad and whether for competitive fencing purposes or otherwise; any public or private meetings organised by BF; and any meetings or activities of any BF committee, subgroup, working group or other similar body tasked by BF to carry out certain functions for BF;

"BF Employees": any employee of BF; any member of the BF Board; any member of the BF Management Group (or any successor group, advisory Board or group of non-executive directors); anyone who is appointed directly by the Board or CEO or whose appointment is required to be notified to the Board, whether on a volunteer or paid basis which for the avoidance of doubt includes any chair of any BF committee, sub-group, working group and any team manager, chef de mission or trip organiser; and anyone who works on BF Activities whether on an employed or self employed basis who is paid from funds awarded by UK Sport, Sport England or any equivalent funding body whether from central or local government or otherwise; "Board": the board of directors of BF from time to time;

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"British Fencing" or "BF": British Fencing Association Limited, a company limited by guarantee registered under the laws of England and Wales with company number 01917099, and its subsidiaries, successors and assigns;

"CEO": the Chief Executive Officer of BF from time to time;

"Data Protection": the Data Protection Act 1998 (as amended) and any subsequent legislation that replaces that Act, either in whole or part, any other relevant legislation whether UK or European and any data protection policy or related documents of BF

"Equality Policy" or "EP" this equality policy, as amended from time to time; and

"Policy Statement": "British Fencing is committed to providing equal opportunities for all and is committed to following best practice in the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. For further information please consult: www.britishfencing.com" or similar statement as amended from time to time.

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