

Athletics Northern Ireland

Equal Opportunities and Equity Policy

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 Athletics NI is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and is responsible for ensuring that no job applicant, employee, volunteer or member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, parental or marital status, pregnancy, religious belief, class or social background, sexual preference or political belief.
- 1.2 Athletics NI will ensure that there will be open access to all those who wish to participate in all aspects of athletics activities and that they are treated fairly.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 Athletics NI recognises that certain sections of the community have been affected by past discrimination and may be denied the opportunity to participate equally and fully in sport at all levels.
- 2.2 This policy has been produced to prevent/tackle any potential/current discrimination or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, against its employees, members and volunteers.

3. Actions

- 3.1 Athletics NI will produce and maintain an action plan to ensure the intent of this policy is delivered.
- 3.2 All areas of the organisation will be affected by this action plan, which will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, on an annual basis.
- 3.3 Athletics NI recognises that, in some cases, to achieve the principle of equality, unequal effort is required and, if appropriate, will consider positive action to tackle underrepresentation.

4. Legal Requirements

- 4.1 Athletics NI is required by law not to discriminate against its employees and recognises its legal obligations under, and will abide by the requirements of, the following:
 - Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 (as amended)
 - Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (as amended)
 - Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (as amended)
 - Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (as amended)
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - Equality (Disability, etc.) (Northern Ireland) Order 2000
 - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
 - Northern Ireland Act 1998
- 4.2 Athletics NI will seek advice each time the policy is reviewed to ensure it continues to comply with all legislation requirements.

5. Discrimination, harassment and victimisation

5.1 Discrimination can take the following forms:

5.1.1 *Direct Discrimination.* This means treating someone less favourably than you would treat others in the same circumstances.

5.1.2 *Indirect Discrimination.* This occurs when a job requirement or condition is applied equally to all, which has a disproportionate and detrimental affect on one sector of society, because fewer from that sector can comply with it and the requirement cannot be justified in relation to the job.

5.1.3 When decisions are made about an individual, the only personal characteristics taken into account will be those which, as well as being consistent with relevant legislation, are necessary to the proper performance of the work involved.

5.2 *Harassment is described as* inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence to the recipient. It may be directed towards people because of their gender, appearance, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, sexual preference, a disability or some other characteristic. Athletics NI is committed to ensuring that its employees, members, participants and volunteers are able to conduct their activities free from harassment or intimidation.

5.3 *Victimisation is defined as* when someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against Athletics NI under one of the relevant Acts/regulations (as previously outlined) or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

5.4 Athletics NI regards discrimination, harassment or victimisation, as described above, as serious misconduct and any employee, volunteer or member who discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action.

6. Responsibility, implementation and communication

6.1 The following responsibilities will apply:

6.1.1 The Management Board is responsible for ensuring that this Equal Opportunities Policy is followed and to deal with any actual or potential breaches.

6.1.2 The Honorary Secretary has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.1.3 A specific member of staff, designated by the Honorary Secretary, has the overall responsibility for achieving the equity action plan as this will form part of their work programme.

6.1.4 All employees, volunteers and members have responsibilities to respect, act in accordance with and thereby support and promote the spirit and intentions of the policy and, where appropriate, individual work programmes will be amended to include equity related tasks.

6.2 The new/amended policy will be implemented immediately following Board agreement and, at a corporate level, will result in the following:

6.2.1 A copy of this document will be available to all staff (both permanent and contract), members and volunteers of Athletics NI.

- 6.2.2 Athletics NI will take measures to ensure that its employment practices are non-discriminatory.
- 6.2.3 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.
- 6.2.4 A planned approach will be adopted to eliminate barriers which discriminate.
- 6.2.5 Ensure that consultants and advisers used by Athletics NI can demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of equity and that they abide by this policy.
- 6.3 The new/revised policy will be communicated in the following ways:
 - 6.3.1 It will be part of the staff handbook and reference will be made to it in any codes of conduct.
 - 6.3.2 It will be covered in all staff and volunteer induction training
 - 6.3.3 All members will be made aware of the policy's existence when they join and a summary of any revisions will be made available.
 - 6.3.4 It will be available on the Web site.
 - 6.3.5 At time of review, a mechanism will be put in place to allow all staff, members and volunteers to be part of the process.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 7.1 Once approved, the policy will apply for 3 years before a formal review takes place, unless any proposal to the Board, or legislation change, requires an interim review and/or amendment.
- 7.2 The equity action plan, created to ensure the intent of the policy is delivered, will be reviewed by the Honorary Secretary and the member of staff with the responsibility for its implementation, on a regular basis.
- 7.3 As part of the overall business delivery plan, the equity action plan, will be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis.

8. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

- 8.1 To safeguard individual rights under the policy, an employee, volunteer or member who believes he/she has suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of the policy may raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure.
- 8.2 Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, volunteer or member who violates Athletics NI 's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 8.3 An individual may raise any grievance and no employee, volunteer or member will be penalised for doing so unless it is untrue and not made in good faith.
- 8.4 As with all grievance procedures, the final point of appeal relating to this policy is the Board appeals committee.