



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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Introduction

The EFL is responsible for setting the standards, values and expectations of all Clubs in relation to equality, inclusion and diversity. Football is for everyone; it belongs to and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it, whether as a player, official, staff member or spectator.

The aim of the Colchester United FC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is to promote our own equality, diversity and inclusion (E, D & I) objectives and in doing so, help to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect. All Colchester United FC representatives should abide and adhere to this Policy and to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. In doing so, we are working towards being legally compliant in relation to equality legislation.

Colchester United FC's commitment is to promote inclusion and to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership race, nationality, ethnicity (race), religion or belief, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity and to encourage equal opportunities. These are known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

This Policy is fully supported by the Board of Colchester United FC and General Manager, Tim Waddington, is responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Colchester United Board and Chairman are publicly accountable for Equality and will receive regular updates on the Colchester United activities and the implementation of the Equality Policy from a member E, D & I Board Representative. It is the role of the Board and General Manager to address any actual or potential breaches of the policy.

Colchester United FC will ensure that it treats everyone fairly and with respect and that it will provide access and opportunities for all members of the community to take part in, and enjoy, its activities. Every staff member, Board member, official, spectator, fan and visiting teams can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and that they are able to work in and watch football in an environment without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

1. Policy Statement

Colchester United Football Club (CUFC) is fully committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) throughout all aspects of its operations.

Football is for everyone. It belongs to and should be enjoyed by all, whether as players, coaches, employees, officials, volunteers, or supporters. CUFC embraces its responsibility to ensure that football within the Club is welcoming, safe, and inclusive for all.

This policy outlines CUFC's commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and fostering a culture where individual differences are recognised, respected, and valued.

The Club adheres fully to the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant UK equality legislation, ensuring legal compliance and best practice in employment, service delivery, and community engagement.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote equality, fairness, and respect for all individuals involved with Colchester United.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and bullying.
- Ensure that CUFC provides an inclusive environment free from intimidation or abuse.
- Comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Football Association (FA) and English Football League (EFL) Equality Standards, and associated Codes of Practice.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All CUFC staff, directors, players, and volunteers.
- Contractors, agency workers, and consultants.
- Supporters, spectators, and visiting teams.
- All services, facilities, and activities associated with Colchester United FC.

4. Policy Commitments

Colchester United FC commits to:

a) **Equality of Opportunity**

Ensure that no person is treated less favourably or disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. These **include** age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

b) **Inclusive Culture**

Create a working and playing environment that promotes dignity, respect, and mutual understanding, and where the contributions of all individuals are recognised and valued.

c) **Zero Tolerance of Discrimination**

Take immediate and proportionate action against any instance of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation. Such behaviour will be treated as misconduct and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

d) **Positive Action and Education**

Deliver training and awareness programmes to educate staff, players, and stakeholders on equality, diversity, and inclusion principles. CUFC will also take positive action to encourage participation from underrepresented groups.

e) **Accessibility and Participation**

Ensure that facilities, activities, and services are accessible to everyone, removing or reducing barriers to participation wherever reasonably possible.

f) **Monitoring and Review**

Regularly review employment practices, recruitment procedures, and community engagement activities to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.

5. Responsibilities and Accountability

The CUFC Board and Chairman hold overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

The General Manager is responsible for operational oversight and ensuring that EDI principles are embedded throughout the organisation.

An appointed EDI Board Representative will report regularly to the Board on progress, outcomes, and any issues relating to equality and inclusion.

All staff, players, and representatives of the Club are expected to uphold this policy and contribute to an inclusive environment.

6. Complaints and Compliance

CUFC encourages anyone who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment, or bullying to report it promptly and without fear of retaliation. Complaints will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and addressed in line with the Club's grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Complaints may be raised through:

- Line management or HR
- The Club's Grievance Procedure (see Staff Manual)
- External reporting where legally appropriate

Use of internal procedures does not affect an individual's right to raise a claim through an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged act of discrimination.

7. Relevant Legislation

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Gender Recognition Act 2004

These laws collectively protect individuals from unfair treatment, promote equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between diverse groups.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant change in legislation, best practice, or Club structure.

Forms of Discrimination

- Direct Discrimination: Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect Discrimination: Applying a rule or practice that disadvantages a group with a protected characteristic.
- Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating or hostile environment.
- Victimisation: Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint under equality legislation.
- Bullying: Persistent offensive, intimidating, or insulting behaviour involving misuse of power.

Approval

This policy is fully supported and endorsed by the Colchester United Board of Directors. It represents our continuing commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of our operations.