****

**Equality Policy**

**Version 1**

**Published: September 2022**

**Approved by Committee: 28 September 2022**

**Sponsor: Welfare Officer**

**1. Policy Statement**

1.1. North Highland Harriers (NHH) endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that all club members who wish to be involved in club activities, whether as an athlete, official, volunteer, coach, or committee member:

a. Have a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age[[1]](#footnote-1), sex, gender identity, disability[[2]](#footnote-2), marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation.

b. Can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

**2. Legal Obligations**

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

**3. Positive Action**

3.1. 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. The club will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to the sport and participation in associated activities by people from any group that has difficulty accessing it.

**4. Implementation**

4.1. A copy of this policy shall be published on the NHH website.

4.2. All club members shall abide by this policy as a condition of NHH membership.

4.3. The committee shall take overall responsibility for the implementation and observation of this policy, taking full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to club activities.

4.4. NHH shall ensure that access to membership is open and inclusive.

4.5. NHH shall support Scottish Athletics by collaborating with any surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in endurance running and shall take account of the findings to promote and enhance sports equality.

4.6. NHH shall promote equality and diversity training provided by Scottish Athletics to its members – with a focus on committee members, coaches, officials and volunteers – in order to raise awareness of collective and individual responsibilities.

4.7. Club members shall support measures and initiatives that NHH or Scottish Athletics may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

4.8. Any person who violates this policy shall be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

**5. Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation**

5.1. The committee shall periodically review all club activities and initiatives against the aims of this policy.

5.2. The club may appoint an Equality Officer to review any measures or initiatives that Scottish Athletics may institute or take part in to promote and enhance sports equality in athletics and feed back to the committee.

5.3. The Equality Officer and Welfare Officer shall review this policy at least every 3 years or when necessary due to changes in the Scottish Athletics Equality Policy.

**6. Complaints and Compliance**

6.1. NHH regards all forms of discriminatory behaviour as unacceptable, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix.

6.2. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any club member or volunteer who violates this policy.

6.3. NHH shall ensure that individuals are able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

6.4. Any individual who believes that they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by another club member should first highlight the matter to that person if they feel comfortable to do so. If this does not resolve the matter, or if the individual does not feel comfortable to do so, the individual may discuss their concerns with the Welfare Officer (welfare@northhighlandharriers.co.uk).

6.5. If the matter cannot be resolved informally then the individual may submit a written application for investigation (complaint) to the Chairperson and disciplinary action shall be conducted in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

6.6. Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amounts to a criminal offence, the individual or Welfare Officer may contact the appropriate authority.

6.7. In the event that an individual or organisation associated with NHH is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the club will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action in accordance with the Discipline Policy.

**APPENDIX – Relevant legislation and forms of unacceptable discrimination**

**Legal rights**

Discrimination has been legally defined through the Equality Act 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 characteristic. 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.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**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. NHH membership is not open to Under 18s due to complexity of implementing Safeguarding protocols. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NHH is not registered as disability athletics club therefore may not be able to provide full scope of activities to all members. Risk Assessments may preclude athletes with specific disabilities due to safety concerns. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)