

COUNTY EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Purpose of this policy

This policy sets out Somerset LTA's (SLTA) commitment to a culture of everyday inclusion, and driving greater diversity and equitable outcomes in tennis. It outlines some of the ways in which we will work in order to bring this commitment to life. It sets out what our colleagues, members and colleagues can expect of us, and hold us to account against, in the way we operate on a day-to-day basis.

Who is responsible for the implementation of this policy?

While helping to build a culture of inclusion and drive greater diversity across tennis is everyone in the organisation's responsibility, the SLTA Councillors are individually and collectively responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

What does this policy cover?

This policy applies to all aspects of SLTA's work and to all people who work or volunteer for it as they carry out those roles, as well as anyone taking part in tennis related activity which the Association is responsible for.

What is meant by equity, diversity and inclusion?

Equity is about working to achieve parity of outcome for people with different characteristics. It is not the same as equality. Equality assumes that everyone should be treated the same regardless of needs, experiences and opportunity. Equity is about recognising that not everyone starts from the same place and that sometimes targeted interventions are needed to give people the same chance of achieving a particular outcome, such as playing tennis regularly or becoming a coach.

Diversity is the mix of characteristics, experiences and other distinctions which make people different from one another. This can include differences in race, sex, religion, sexual identity, age, socio-economic background or whether or not someone is disabled. Understanding this mix is vital to being able to make all people feel included.

Inclusion for all is the ultimate goal, it is a culture in which everybody can feel comfortable and confident to be themselves, no matter their visible or hidden differences. Diversity without inclusion means that people from more diverse backgrounds will feel excluded and so that diversity, and the benefits for a sport or organisation which come with it, will not last.

Commitment to everyday inclusion, greater diversity and more equitable outcomes

SLTA is fully committed to playing its part in opening tennis up. We will do this by building a culture of everyday inclusion and operating in a way which enables, encourages and values greater diversity and more equitable outcomes for all, in all aspects of our sport, with the intention that the sport and our Association reflect the diversity of the communities around us.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- Encourage equity, diversity and inclusion in every aspect of our work as an Association, recognising that it brings benefits both to tennis and to the strength of our work as an organisation.
- Create a working environment for all paid staff and volunteers free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

- Ensure that the Association is run in a positively inclusive way on a day-to-day basis, taking into account that people from different backgrounds and with different personal contexts have different needs to enable them to contribute fully to the organisation.
- Ensure that our recruitment processes and policies enable and encourage people from all backgrounds to become part of the Association and/or its work. We will make decisions concerning roles within the Association based on merit, including the benefits of maintaining diversity across all individuals engaged in the Association's work.
- Take seriously complaints of non-inclusive and/or discriminatory behaviour of all kinds in relation to any aspect of the Association's work. We will deal with all such complaints in line with our published complaints policy which is at Appendix 2 and, where appropriate, in conjunction with the LTA Disciplinary and Inclusion teams centrally.

Agreement to follow this policy

The equity, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by SLTA and was agreed in conjunction with the LTA centrally.

This policy is reviewed every two years (or earlier if there is a change in national legislation).

Approved by Somerset LTA – 21 March 2024

Appendix 1: The law and types of unlawful discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 is the main, overarching anti-discrimination law which [insert County and Island Association name] is required to follow to help ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted across various groups and that diversity is at the heart of all that we do.

It is unlawful for [insert County and Island Association name] as an employer, potential employer and in relation to any of its functions to discriminate against persons directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation or religion or belief.

Direct discrimination is deliberately treating an individual less favourably than another person because of a characteristic stated above without a lawful exception to do so. For example, by refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant or refusing to allow a person to compete in a competition because they are from a diverse ethnic background.

Indirect discrimination is applying a provision, criterion or practice that creates a disadvantage for a person because of one of the characteristics outlined above in the absence of proportionality and a legitimate aim. For example, a minimum height requirement for a job where height is not relevant to carry out the role. Such a requirement would likely discriminate disproportionately against women as they are generally shorter than men.

Disability discrimination is direct or indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the characteristics outlined above (other than marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is discriminated against, harassed, or potentially victimised because of their association with another individual who has a characteristic outlined above (other than marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, however pregnancy or maternity may fall within a sex discrimination claim because of association with a pregnant woman or a woman on maternity leave).

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a characteristic outlined above when they do not, in fact, have that characteristic (other than marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity).

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion, because they made or supported a complaint or legal proceedings under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Appendix 2: Complaint's Procedure

In the event that any employee, member, volunteer, visitor or visiting team feels that he, she or they have suffered discrimination or harassment in any way or that the policies, rules or code of conduct have been broken they should follow the procedures below.

1. The complainant should report the matter in writing to the County Safeguarding Officer or another member of the management committee. The report should include:
 - a. details of what occurred;
 - b. details of when and where the occurrence took place;
 - c. any witness details and copies of any witness statements;
 - d. names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed);
 - e. details of any former complaints made about the incident, including the date and to whom such complaint was made;
 - f. and an indication as to the desired outcome.
2. In taking any disciplinary action the Council will seek guidance from the LTA and appoint an individual to take responsibility for following through the guidance.
3. If the person accused of discriminatory behaviour is a non-employee, the management committee or representatives of the management committee:
 - a. will request that both parties to the complaint submit written evidence regarding the incident(s);
 - b. may decide (at its sole discretion) after reviewing the complaint and supporting evidence to uphold or dismiss the complaint without holding a hearing;
 - c. may (at its sole discretion) hold a hearing (whether or not such a hearing is requested by either party) at which both parties will be entitled to attend and present their case;
 - d. will have the power to impose any one or more of the following sanctions on any person found to be in breach of any policy, (including the Equality Policy):
 - i. warn as to future conduct;
 - ii. suspend from membership;
 - iii. remove from membership;
 - iv. exclude a non-member from the facility, either temporarily or permanently;
 - v. turn down a non-member's current and/or future membership applications.
 - e. will provide both parties with written reasons for its decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within one calendar month of such decision being made.
4. Either party may appeal a decision of the management committee to the County Association (including a decision not to hold a hearing) by writing to the LTA within 3 months of the decision being notified to that party.
5. If the nature of the complaint is with regard to the management committee or other body or group, the member/visitor has the right to report the discrimination or harassment directly to the LTA.
6. Useful contacts:
 - a. LTA 02084877000 / safeguarding@lta.org.uk

- b. NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
- c. Childline 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk
- d. Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk
- e. Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org

Appendix 3: Related policies and documents

Please also see the following documents for further context and information:

- [lta-inclusion-strategy-2021-23.pdf](#)
- [lta-code-of-conduct.pdf](#)
- [lta-disciplinary-code-with-effect-from-1-january-2023-1.pdf](#)
- [customer-guidance-lta-support-and-complaint-handling-update.pdf](#)