



BOARD APPROVAL:	OCT 19
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CORPORATE POLICY 007

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Introduction

Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Limited (GBWR) is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of Wheelchair Rugby in England, Scotland and Wales. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee and was incorporated in February 2007.

GBWR is a full member of the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF) and of the British Paralympic Association (BPA). In both organisations it has full voting rights. GBWR is funded through public and commercial investment and through fundraising.

GBWR's mission is to lead, promote, grow and support Wheelchair Rugby for the enjoyment of all, inspiring and achieving excellence in everything we do.

This policy applies to GBWR members of staff, Board members, participants, volunteers, members and supporters (i.e. its "stakeholders".) In addition, GBWR will use its influence to encourage other stakeholders to adhere to the objectives of this policy.

1. Policy Objectives

- 1.1 GBWR is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and is responsible for ensuring that no employees, Board members, volunteers, supporters, participants, job applicants or members (together "stakeholders") are unlawfully discriminated against on grounds of age, gender, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, race, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or disability (together the "Protected Characteristics"). In addition, GBWR recognises that not all disability and difference is visible and may include communication and learning differences (including but not limited to Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia etc.), mental health issues and the impact of past/current trauma.
- 1.2 GBWR seeks to ensure that it treats everyone fairly and with respect, and will provide access and opportunities for all stakeholders to engage with wheelchair rugby activities in an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected.
- 1.3 In addition, GBWR recognises that we live in a diverse society and will endeavour to ensure that all stakeholders are given the same opportunities regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. Consequently, GBWR considers socio-economic background to be equivalent to a Protected Characteristic.
- 1.4 The exception to this is within the athlete qualification process for certain competitions, including the Paralympic Games, where nationality and disability are requisites for selection.



2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1. Advancing equality of opportunity, fostering a culture of inclusivity and promoting good relations for all.
- 2.2. Promoting a harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect and in line with our other values of trust, excellence, enjoyment, teamwork and inclusiveness.
- 2.3. Preventing occurrences of unlawful or unfair direct discriminations, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 2.4. Preventing occurrences of associative discrimination and discrimination by perception.
- 2.5. Fulfilling GBWR's legal and regulatory obligations under equality legislation, internal policies and codes of practice e.g. Sport England's 'A Code for Sports Governance', the Equality Standard - A Framework for Sport (www.equalityinsport.org), NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) 'Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport'.
- 2.6. Enabling and supporting transparent challenge and positive engagement with all stakeholders who raise concerns in relation to negative experience and impact as a result of perceived discrimination and/or prejudice, embracing the benefits of diversity and ensuring that a welcoming and inclusive environment is created.

3. Legal Requirements

- 3.1. GBWR is required by law not to unlawfully discriminate against its stakeholders and recognises its legal obligations under - and will abide by the requirements of - the Equality Act 2010 and any relevant equivalent legislation (as amended) in any UK jurisdiction, and any later amendments to such legislation or subsequent equality related legislation that may be relevant to GBWR.
- 3.2. GBWR will seek advice each time this Policy is reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect the current legal framework and good practice.
- 3.3. GBWR will uphold the principle that the welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount and prioritise safeguarding of children and adults at risk in line with UK legislation (including the Care Act 2014, Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and supporting statutory guidance), GBWR's safeguarding policy and GBWR's commitment to safeguarding and protecting those who may be additionally vulnerable as a result of equality and diversity issues.

4. Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation

GBWR regards discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, as described below, as serious misconduct. All complaints will be taken seriously and proportionate measures including disciplinary action will be brought against any stakeholder who is found to discriminate against any other person or group of people. GBWR recognises the following as being unacceptable:

- 4.1. Unlawful discrimination, which can take the following forms:



- 4.1.1. Direct Discrimination: treating someone less favourably than you would treat others because of a Protected Characteristic.
- 4.1.2. Indirect Discrimination: applying a provision or practice which, on the face of it, applies equally to all but which, in practice can disadvantage individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic. Such requirements or conditions are lawful only if they can be objectively justified.
- 4.2. Harassment: engaging in unwanted contact relating to a relevant Protected Characteristic and/or conduct, including of a sexual nature, where the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the recipient, or any other individual affected by such conduct. GBWR is committed to ensuring that its stakeholders are also able to conduct their activities free from harassment.
- 4.3. Bullying: the misuse of power or position to criticise persistently or to humiliate and undermine an individual's confidence.
- 4.4. Victimisation: subjecting someone to a detriment because they have in good faith taken action under the Equality Act 2010 (or equivalent legislation) by bringing proceedings, giving evidence or information in relation to proceedings, making an allegation that a person has contravened the Equality Act 2010 (or equivalent legislation) or doing any other thing for the purpose of or in connection with the Equality Act 2010 (or any equivalent legislation).
- 4.5. Associative discrimination: treating someone unfairly on the basis of Protected Characteristics (see clause 1.1), of a connected third party.
- 4.6. Discrimination by perception: treating someone unfairly because of a perceived protected characteristic when the protected characteristic does not apply to them.
- 5. Reasonable Adjustments and Reasonable Steps:**
- 5.1. When any decision is made about an 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.
- 5.2. GBWR has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons. GBWR will consider all requests for adjustments and where possible will accommodate reasonable requests and will work with disabled stakeholders to implement any adjustments that will enable them to participate more fully in our activities.
- 5.3. GBWR will take reasonable steps to make adjustments for all disadvantaged groups (other than disabled persons – see 5.2 above). GBWR will consider all requests and where possible will accommodate reasonable requests.
- 5.4. GBWR recognises its selection of Athletes for international competitions will be based solely on eligibility, classification and performance standard met. GBWR will not then discriminate against the Protected Characteristics (see clause 1.4)



6. Responsibility, implementation and communication:

6.1. The following responsibilities will apply:

6.1.1. The GBWR Board is responsible for ensuring that this Equality and Diversity Policy is implemented, followed, and reviewed when appropriate. The GBWR Board is also responsible for ensuring that this Equality and Diversity Policy is enforced, and any breaches are dealt with appropriately.

6.1.2. A member of the Board will be assigned as an Equality and Diversity Champion and will ensure that diversity/equality is included as an agenda item at Board meetings when appropriate and that the Board takes equality and diversity issues into consideration when making decisions.

6.1.3. The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this Equality and Diversity Policy. A member of staff may be identified as the designated Equality and Diversity Officer as appointed by the Chief Executive, in which case that person will have the overall day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this Equality and Diversity policy and for achieving any equality related actions resulting from it. The Equality and Diversity Officer's work programme will be amended to reflect this.

6.1.4. All stakeholders have the responsibility to respect, follow and promote the spirit and intentions of this Equality and Diversity Policy. Individual work programmes for GBWR staff will be amended to include equality and diversity related tasks where appropriate.

6.2. This Equality and Diversity Policy will be implemented immediately following Board approval. Implementation requires the following actions:

6.2.1. GBWR will regularly review its recruitment and employment practices to ensure continuing compliance with relevant legislation and good practice. All job advertisements produced by GBWR will contain the following:

“GB Wheelchair Rugby is fully committed to the principles of the equality of opportunity. It is responsible for ensuring that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, gender, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, race, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, or socio-economic background than any other.”

6.2.2. No applicant for any post (including job applicants, consultant advisers and suppliers) will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute unlawful discrimination.

6.2.3. Consultants and advisers (and where appropriate suppliers) to GBWR will be required to abide by this Equality and Diversity Policy and it will be referred to in any service level agreements or contracts issued by GBWR.

6.2.4. GBWR will endeavour to increase employees' knowledge and skills in the area of equality.

6.3. This Equality and Diversity Policy will be communicated in the following ways:





- 6.3.1. Reference will be made to this policy in any code of conduct. This Policy is for guidance only and will not form part of any contract of employment with any employees of GBWR;
- 6.3.2. The Policy will be highlighted in all staff, Board, Committee member, volunteer, member and other relevant inductions.
- 6.3.3. A copy of this Policy will be publicly available on the GBWR website to download.
- 6.3.4. Each time this Policy is reviewed, GBWR stakeholders may be consulted. Following any consultation, a notice of the changes will be made publicly available.
- 6.3.5. GBWR will promote continuing professional development for all employees and volunteers to support equal opportunities within the organisation and, where appropriate, provide specialist facilities, equipment or training.

7. Actions

- 7.1. GBWR will maintain and monitor its Diversity Action Plan to ensure the objectives of this Equality and Diversity Policy are consistently delivered throughout all areas of the organisation.
- 7.2. GBWR recognises that, in some cases, to further the principle of equality, an unequal distribution of resources may be required. If appropriate and proportionate, GBWR (through the Chief Executive) will consider positive action or may introduce special measures to assist any group with a Protected Characteristic that is currently underrepresented within any group of stakeholders. GBWR has the vision: “to provide an inclusive, accessible, enjoyable, fulfilling Wheelchair Rugby experience for all” and in this context GBWR is particularly aware of the need for appropriate representation of disabled people, including disabled athletes, at all levels of the organisation.
- 7.3. GBWR regards breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy as misconduct and will take disciplinary action, when required, in accordance with our Organisational Disciplinary Policy and Staff Disciplinary Policy and their associated Procedures.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 8.1. This Equality and Diversity Policy will remain in force until it is amended, replaced or withdrawn. A review of this Policy will take place as and when required, but not less than once every two years.
- 8.2. The Diversity and Equality actions plans, created to ensure the objectives of this Equality and Diversity Policy are delivered, will be regularly reviewed by the Chief Executive. The Board will review the Diversity and Equality Action Plan not less than once every 12 months.

9. Complaints Procedures

- 9.1. To safeguard individual rights under this Equality and Diversity Policy, any stakeholder who believes they have suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of this Policy may raise the matter through the appropriate procedure:



- The employee Grievances Policy & Procedure for employees; or
- The Complaints Policy & Procedure for stakeholders who are not employees.

and

- Any safeguarding issues will be considered in the first instance where concerns arise in relation to children, young people or adults at risk in line with GBWR's "Safe and Sound" Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy; and
 - Any harassment and/or bullying issues will be considered in the first instance in line with GBWR's Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 9.2. Proportionate disciplinary action (under the relevant GBWR Disciplinary Policies) may be taken against any GBWR stakeholder who breaches this Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 9.3. An individual raising a grievance or complaint in good faith will not be penalised for doing so unless it is known by them to be untrue at the time it is reported and deemed to be malicious.
- 9.4. As with all complaint, grievance and disciplinary procedures, the final point of appeal relating to this policy is the GBWR Chair (or his/her representative, who will be a GBWR Trustee not personally connected with the subject of the disciplinary action).