Equality Policy

Foreword

Active Oxfordshire is committed to equality and diversity in the way it operates as an organisation and in the way it delivers as an agent for change. It believes in and pro-actively promotes equal opportunities in its recruitment and employment practices including both Trustees and Staff appointments. It seeks to promote equality and tackle wider inequalities through the services it provides with and through partner networks. It does this by engaging, involving, promoting and developing people from a diverse range of backgrounds as participants, coaches, officials, administrators and leaders in physical activity and sport.

As part of the organisation’s core commitment to Equality, Active Oxfordshire conforms to Code 3 Sports Governance requirements and will sign up to meet the standards of external accreditation required of it by Sport England as a bare minimum.

At the moment Active Oxfordshire is committed to working towards the Equality Standard, which will enable us to check and challenge current practices and ensure we are engaging all members of the community. As a precursor to this the organisation is working on Activity Alliance’s LEAD self-assessment process with two local authority partners.

Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures

It is this organisation's policy to treat all job applicants and employees fairly and equally, regardless of sex, pregnancy, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins or disability. The organisation will monitor the composition of the workforce to ensure that this policy is effective.

Through this policy and procedure and the training and development of Trustees, and Staff the organisation will do all it can to promote good practice in this area in order to eliminate discrimination and harassment as far as is reasonably possible. We adopt the following procedures:

1. The organisation is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about good employment practices and efficient use of our most valuable asset, our employees. Every manager and employee has personal responsibility for the implementation of the policy. Any instance of doubt about the application of the policy, or other questions, should be addressed to the CE as should any requests for special training.
2. The organisation will not discriminate on grounds of sex, trans-gender status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins or disability. The prohibition on discrimination applies equally to situations where someone thinks or perceives (whether rightly or wrongly) that a colleague
is of a particular race, sexual orientation, religion, age, sex or that they have a disability, is a trans-gender person, or is pregnant.

5. The policy applies to the process of recruitment and selection, promotion, training, conditions of work, pay and benefits and to every other aspect of employment, including general treatment at work and the processes involved in the termination of employment.

6. Where increased pay and/or enhanced benefits are offered to employees on the basis of length of service, these are intended to reward loyalty, maintain motivation and reflect higher levels of relevant experience.

7. The policy applies to job applicants (both internal and external) and all employees and other workers whether full time, part time, temporary, and seasonal or contract.

8. Employees should note that the imposition of any provision, criterion or practice which has a disproportionate adverse impact on someone for a reason related to sex, trans-gender status, race, married status, civil partnership status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or age will be unlawful unless it can be objectively justified. In the event of any query or doubt, the CE should be consulted.

9. When establishing criteria for recruitment and promotion into vacant posts, the organisation will consider carefully whether any minimum or maximum number of years of relevant experience is necessary for effective performance of the job. Such restrictions will not be imposed unless there is a proper job-based reason why they are necessary.

10. The organisation does not operate any compulsory retirement age, and each employee may choose for themselves when to stop working, subject to them continuing to be sufficiently fit to perform their job to a satisfactory standard.

11. Employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the organisation about their disability. Management will then arrange to discuss with the employee what reasonable adjustments to their or working conditions or environment might assist them in the performance of their duties. The employee will also be encouraged to suggest any adjustments that they believe would be helpful. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals and, where reasonable and reasonably practicable, such adjustments will be made. There may, however, be circumstances where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the organisation to accommodate proposals put forward by the employee.

12. Any member of staff may use the Grievance Procedure or Bullying and Harassment Procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to sexual or racial harassment or harassment on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, trans-gender status, religion or belief or age, then the complaint may be raised directly with the CE. The organisation is concerned to ensure that staff feel comfortable about raising such complaints. No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice.

13. Where an employee is falsely accused of discriminatory conduct, then they may implement the organisation's grievance procedure.

14. Any employee who makes a false accusation of harassment will be subjected to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal.
Equality in Physical Activity and Sport.

- Equality is about fairness, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them.
- Equality is about making sure that all people can realise their talent and fulfil their full potential.
- Equality is about individual and organisational responsibility to challenge discriminatory practice, promote inclusion and deliver systems change.

Active Oxfordshire recognises that barriers exist for certain people to access and participate in physical activity and sport. Our aim is to increase access to sporting opportunities by working to eliminate inequalities, prejudice, stereotypes and promote access for all. Our policies and practices conform to policy and legislation surrounding equality namely:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Macpherson Report 1999
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Employment Equality (religion and belief) 2003
- Employment Equality (sexual orientation) 2003
- Employment Equality (age) 2005
- Equality Act (inc. +ve duty on gender) 2006
- Equality Act (sexual orientation) 2007
- Equality Act 2010

Active Oxfordshire believes that everybody should have the opportunity to be active and involved in sport regardless of age, ability, gender, race, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or socio-economic status. We are determined to reduce health inequalities, widen access to opportunities, services and facilities and, above all, to increase activity levels in the areas and communities where there is most need/disadvantage. In doing so we can improve equality at all levels in terms of participation, volunteering, coaching and leadership in local communities, across sport and in organisations we work with.

In line with Sport England's Code for Sports Governance, we are aiming to recruit a Board of Trustees that reflects the diversity of the population we serve. Whilst our current Board is made up of 40% women, we will continue to work towards achieving full gender parity. We are also conscious that our Board is not yet reflective of the wider population diversity of Oxfordshire, including, but not restricted to, Black, Asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) communities, and disabled people. This is something we will seek to address on a pro-active basis through the new Board Succession Plan by positively encouraging applications from under-represented groups. We will do this by working with Sport England and their appointed consultants Perrett Laver, and by working with partners such as Oxford Hub and Oxfordshire Community Foundation on their various volunteering and leadership programmes.

The Active Oxfordshire Board will oversee the implementation of the Equality Policy and all staff will have a responsibility for its execution. Where we work in collaboration, we would expect partners to adopt the same principles and goals.

Implementation will be guided through clear targets incorporated into the following plans:

- Active Oxfordshire’s Operational and Business Plan.
• Marketing and Communications Plan
• Equality Action Plan- to be developed in 2020 as part of our improvement drive.

Specifically, Active Oxfordshire will allocate resources to actively raise levels of activity and participation in targeted communities/locations and with clearly identified priority groups identified by local and national data and insight studies. Based on current knowledge this will involve a focus on

• People from Lower socio-economic groups
• Women and Girls
• Black and Minority Ethnic communities
• Disabled people and People with Long Term Health Conditions

Interventions will be shaped through consultation with local communities, partner agencies and the adoption of best practice from inside and outside the County. Training and development opportunities will be provided for staff and key partners to raise awareness of their individual and collective responsibilities in promoting equality.

Active Oxfordshire will aim to monitor and evaluate the policy, practices and procedures of the partnership and review and update accordingly.

Implementation of the policy will be monitored and evaluated as part of the overall operational plan, the emerging Balanced Scorecard, a specific equality action plan to be developed and implemented as well as through individual work objectives and targets

Progress against Key Performance Indicators related to the priority groups identified will be presented to the Active Oxfordshire Board on an annual basis and published in Active Oxfordshire’s annual report.

Leadership of this work area rests with Active Oxfordshire’s Chief Executive and he/she will be supported by an Equality Champion on the Board Of Trustees.