

## Equality Policy

### **FOREWORD**

This policy is intended to demonstrate West Ham United's commitment to eliminating discrimination and encouraging and valuing diversity and we expect commitment and involvement from all our players, staff, partners, suppliers, and match-day fans.

We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and are committed to meeting them in full. We believe that a culture that embraces equality and values diversity will help us to ensure that everyone feels involved and included in our plans, programmes and activities.

We aim to create an environment which respects and welcomes everyone, and in which no form of bullying, harassment, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour is tolerated by anyone towards anyone. This particularly applies in relation to the 'protected characteristics' named in the Equality Act 2010.

Karren Brady  
Vice Chairman

### **Equality Statement**

West Ham United endorses the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in the club whether as players, match-day fans, staff, Board members, participants in outreach programmes and other people engaged with the club's activities (for example, suppliers, corporate partners):

Has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation; and

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 engagement at the club without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment, bullying and abuse.

### **Legal obligations**

West Ham United is committed to avoiding and eliminating unfair discrimination of any kind in the club, and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to harassment, victimisation or bullying. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Appendix.

### **Positive action**

As well as complying with legislation clubs should be promoting equality by 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.

West Ham United will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to our club, as well as require participation in associated activities by people from any group that is under-represented in the club or has difficulty accessing it.

### **Implementation**

The following steps will be taken to publicise this policy and promote equality in West Ham United:

A copy of this document will be published on the West Ham United website

The West Ham United Board will take overall accountability for ensuring that the policy is observed

The Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of West Ham United

West Ham United will implement regular audits, surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in the club and will take account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance equality in the club.

West Ham United will provide access to a rolling programme of training (for example, online, face-to-face, briefings) for all of its players, match-day fans, staff, Board members, participants in outreach programmes and other people engaged with the club's activities to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities.

It will be a condition of working with West Ham United that suppliers:

Commit to act in accordance with this policy; and

Support such measures and initiatives that West Ham United may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

## **Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Board will be accountable for ensuring the implementation of this policy. The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of equality in the club.

The Chief Finance Officer will review all West Ham United activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy and should report formally on this issue to the Board annually.

The Chief Finance Officer will review any measures or initiatives that West Ham United may institute or take part in to promote and enhance equality in the club, and will report their findings annually to the Board.

The Board itself will review the policy at intervals of no more than three years, (or when necessary due to changes in legislation) in line with the West Ham United policy review process.

## **Complaints and compliance**

West Ham United considers all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is concerned with ensuring individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any player, match-day fan, staff, Board member, participant in outreach programmes and other people engaged with the club's activities who violate the West Ham United's Equality Policy.

Any person who believes that he or she has been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by a player, match-day fan, staff, Board member, participant in outreach programmes and other people engaged with the club's activities should, in the first instance, complain to that person. If this does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against West Ham United itself, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to [supporterservices@westhamunited.co.uk](mailto:supporterservices@westhamunited.co.uk).

West Ham United will investigate the complaint personally and appoint a person to do this. The investigation will be conducted impartially, confidentially, and without avoidable delay. Any person against whom a complaint has been made will be informed of what is alleged and given the opportunity to present their side of the matter.

The parties in question will be notified of the outcome of the investigation, in writing, and reported to the West Ham United Board. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of a person or organisation, West Ham United may impose sanctions on that person or organisation in line with its policies. Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct extending to temporary or permanent expulsion from West Ham United activities. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the Board will consider the severity of the matter and take into account any mitigating circumstances.

Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amount to a criminal offence, the appropriate authority will be informed.

In the event that an individual or organisation associated with West Ham United is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the West Ham United Board will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action as above in relation to the matter concerned.

**Adopted by West Ham United Board**

**2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016**

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

### **Legal rights**

Discrimination has been legally defined through a series of legislative acts, including the Race Relations Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act 2006.

In April 2010, the Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent. The Equality Act 2010 is a new law which harmonises where possible, and in some cases extends to, protection from discrimination. It applies throughout the UK and came into force in October 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, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on grounds of' a protected characteristic<sup>1</sup>. This means that individuals will be protected if they have a characteristic, are assumed to have it, associate with someone who has it or are with someone who is assumed to have it.

### **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**

It is unlawful when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and such unfavourable treatment cannot be justified. 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.