



Brighton & Hove Albion FC



Albion in the Community

Equality Policy

Author	Revisions	Date
Sue Burchett	V1	16.3.16
Sue Burchett	V2	25.8.16
Sue Burchett	V3.1	28.2.18
Sue Burchett	V3.2 to include AITC notes	07 08 18
Rose Read	V.3.3 – minor amends	12.03.18
Rose Read	V4 – further amends following PL assessment visit	07.04.18
Rose Read/Sarah Byrne	V5 – regular update and further amends due to Stonewall review	01/10/2021

Policy Owner:	Head of people and culture
Proposed date for review:	November 2024

Statement of Commitment

Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club and Albion in the Community celebrate and value the diversity brought by employees, potential employees, casual workers, potential casual workers, players, potential players, applicants, supporters, participants on community programmes and customers and believes the Club benefits from engaging with everyone from a variety of backgrounds, thus allowing it to meet the needs of a diverse population within a multi-cultural society.

We share and are committed to the standards, values and expectations set by the Premier League, The Football Association, the EFL and Kick it Out, who each assert that football is for everyone and that it belongs to and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it, whether as a player, official, staff member or spectator.

We vow to treat everyone with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive environment for all of our stakeholders, free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation or abuse. Our aim is to create a positive, inclusive ethos which will work towards the elimination of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and abuse whether overt or covert.

Our aim is to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief. These are known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

We, the Club's Board of Directors, together with the Club's Executive Committee and the AITC trustees, are fully committed to promoting inclusion and believe all forms of prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable.

Our chief executives, have been given responsibility to champion and lead on equality and anti-discrimination and set standards for the club.

The head of People and Culture is the club's designated senior lead on the development and implementation of equality and inclusion measures at the club. Their responsibility is to report all matters pertaining to equality and anti-discrimination to the board and be part of the equality working group responsible for co-ordinating and leading the collective effort to attain the Premier League Equality Diversity & Inclusion Standard (PLEDIS). The Club attained the Intermediate Level of the Premier League Equality Standard (the predecessor of the PLEDIS) in May 2021 and is currently working towards the advanced level of the PLEDIS.

A board director has been nominated as the club's equality champion and is responsible for supporting the board's awareness on all matters relating to equality.

ABOUT THIS POLICY

A Application

This policy applies to all people connected with the activities of Brighton and Hove Albion FC (“BHAFC”, the “Club”), Brighton & Hove Albion Women’s Football Club (BHAWFC) and Albion in the Community (“AIRC”) including permanent, part-time and fixed term employees and workers, board members, volunteers, customers, fans, participants, suppliers and contractors.

B Defined terms

Throughout this policy “we” “our” and “us” means the Club, BHAWFC and AIRC. Throughout this policy, “BHAFC” or “Club” also includes AIRC and BHAWFC.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club (BHAFC) and Albion in the Community (AIRC) celebrates and values the diversity brought to the Club and AIRC by staff, players, matchday fans, board members, participants in outreach programmes, customers and other people engaged with the club’s activities, for example suppliers and corporate partners.
- 1.2 We are committed to encouraging equality and diversity and providing an environment in which rights, dignity and individual worth are respected in all operations, activities and services.
- 1.3 We share and are committed to the standards, values and expectations set by football authorities, including the Premier League, the FA, UEFA and FIFA, who assert that football is for everyone and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it, whether as a player, official, staff member or spectator.
- 1.4 For our employees, we are committed to providing a workplace that values equality and equal opportunities and which is supported by the Club’s Team Brighton values:
 - Treat people well – the club is committed to taking a professional, helpful and approachable attitude towards their supporters, visitors, colleagues and the community.
 - Exceed expectations – the club is dedicated to achieving success by setting high standards and measuring its performance in critical areas
 - Aim high, never give up – the club strives to be the absolute best it can be, and we never give up
 - Act with integrity – we adhere to strong moral and ethical principles, we are honest and we do the right thing
 - Make it special – the club encourages a warm and friendly environment, making Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club a great place to visit and to work
- 1.5 We will provide a positive working and learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or abuse whether overt or covert.
- 1.6 We will confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of: age, disability, gender reassignment marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race,

sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief - known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

2 Implementation

- 2.1 Brighton & Hove Albion FC's Chairman, the Club's Board of Directors, AITC's Board of Trustees and senior management of both organisations are responsible for the implementation of this policy and are fully committed to promoting inclusion. They believe that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable.
- 2.2 A copy of this policy will be published on the Club's website.
- 2.3 Suppliers of the Club will be given a copy of this policy and will be asked to commit to act in accordance with it.

3 Equal Opportunities

- 3.1 The Club is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a matter that is systematic, efficient and effective, and promotes equality of opportunity. The successful implementation of this policy will be vested in the people team.
- 3.2 All staff and players at Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club and AITC have a personal responsibility to uphold the Club's Equality Policy and should abide and adhere to this Policy and to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. All staff and players are required to treat fellow employees, prospective employees, casual workers, prospective casual workers, players, prospective players, job applicants and customers fairly and impartially.
- 3.3 All staff involved with recruitment, selection and promotion have a responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity. Specialist training in this area will be given to all staff involved with recruitment, selection and promotion.
- 3.4 All members of staff should ensure that they abide by this policy during the course of their employment. The Club's 'Playing for Inclusion' workshop, disability awareness, active bystander and unconscious bias training will form part of the training programme for employees.

4 Positive Action

- 4.1 As well as complying with legislation, the Club promotes 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.
- 4.2 We 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.
- 4.3 We require all other codes of conduct, policies and procedures to consider and address equality and inclusion.

5 Complaints and compliance

- 5.1 Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club and AITC regard all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in Appendix 1 as unacceptable. A zero-tolerance approach will be taken by the Club and appropriate action will be taken against any player, employee, Board member, participant in outreach programmes, matchday fan, and other people engaged with the club's activities who is found, after a full investigation, to have violated the Club's Equality Policy.
- 5.2 If a player or member of staff or volunteer believes they have been treated in such a way that is in direct conflict with this Equality Policy, the matter should normally be reported immediately to their line manager or a member of the people team. Where a complaint is made, the Grievance or the Harassment Procedure will be followed. All allegations will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and impartially.
- 5.3 Matchday fans can use the Kick it Out reporting text line or contact the Club's Safety Officer via the club's anti-social hotline by texting details of the location affected, descriptions of offenders and the nature of the issue to: 07880 196 442. Alternatively, they may report the behaviour to a match day steward.
- 5.4 All individuals should feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so. Reports of allegations will be treated in a private and confidential manner. In doing so, we are working towards being legally compliant in relation to equality legislation. 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.
- 5.5 Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amounts to a criminal offence, the appropriate authority will be informed.

6. Hate Crime

- 6.1 A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim, or anybody else, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone's:

- race
- religion
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity
- disability

A hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and damage to property.

We will encourage all victims and/or witnesses of hate crime to report this to the police. We will also report any such incidents to the police.

7 Education & Training

- 7.1 Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club will commit to a programme of raising awareness and educating stakeholders, campaigning, widening diversity and representation and promoting diverse role models, which we believe are all key actions to promote inclusion and eradicate discrimination within football.
- 7.2 The Club will provide a rolling training programme for players and employees which will include the elements detailed in section 3 of this policy in addition to bespoke training tailored to the specific needs of different groups of players and staff.

8 Monitoring & Evaluation

- 8.1 The Club and AITC will implement regular equality audits of the board of directors/board of trustees, employees, volunteers, fans and participants/beneficiaries 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. The audit findings will be presented to the club and charity's boards.
- 8.2 The Club and AITC will formulate a rolling equality action plan informed by the audit findings and this will include SMART targets.

Summary

Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club and AITC will ensure that it treats everyone fairly and with respect and that it will provide access and opportunities for all members of the community to take part in, and enjoy, its activities. Every staff member, Board member, Trustee, official, spectator, fan and visiting team can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to work and watch football in an environment without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

This Equality Policy will be reviewed and updated every three years or upon change in legislation or relevant incident.

Club Board approval:

Signed:

Tony Bloom
Chairman, BHAFC

Date:

AITC Board of Trustees approval:

Signed: Martin Perry

Martin Perry
Chair, AITC

Date: 1/11/21

APPENDIX 1

Legal rights

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society and sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

Discrimination refers to unfavourable treatment on the basis of particular characteristics, which are known as the 'protected characteristics'.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on grounds of' a protected characteristic¹. 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.

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.

For example: supporters shout Homophobic chants, comments or phrases during a match towards a team or individual

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.

For example: an employer requires employees to wear a uniform, including a cap, for appearance reasons, not for hygiene or safety reasons. The requirement is not directly discriminatory, but it has a discriminatory effect against people who are required by religious or cultural beliefs to wear particular headdress.

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.

For example: a player is not allowed to play for a team because they are deaf due to the coach's belief they cannot train with the other players.

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.

For example: a female physiotherapist is made to feel uncomfortable due to sexual comments made about her by a player

¹ 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.

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.

For example: a non-disabled worker gives evidence on behalf of a disabled colleague at an Employment Tribunal hearing where disability discrimination is claimed. If the non-disabled worker is subsequently refused a promotion because of that action, they would have suffered victimisation in contravention of the Act

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.

For example; humiliating or undermining someone either in private or in front of others or ostracising a colleague from team activities