British American Football Association



*Equality Policy*

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**Contents**

[1. Introduction 2](#_Toc491685171)

[2. Policy context 5](#_Toc491685172)

[3. Strategic context 6](#_Toc491685173)

[4. The BAFA equity and diversity vision 6](#_Toc491685174)

[5. Actions 7](#_Toc491685175)

[6. Discrimination, harassment and victimisation 7](#_Toc491685176)

[7. Responsibility and implementation 8](#_Toc491685177)

[8. Communication 8](#_Toc491685178)

[9. Monitoring and evaluation 9](#_Toc491685179)

[10. Disciplinary and grievance procedures 9](#_Toc491685180)

# **1. Introduction**

The British American Football Association (BAFA) is the National Governing Body for the sport of American Football in Great Britain.

BAFA has a moral obligation and duty to represent the diverse membership it works with. In order to address inequalities in our sport and become truly representative of the membership we serve, we will promote equality of opportunity in all our activities.

BAFA is fully committed to the principles of diversity and equality of opportunity and is responsible for ensuring that no one associated with the sport (including applicant, employee, volunteer, member or other) receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristics. These include age, gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, parental or marital status, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, socioeconomic status, caring responsibilities or sexual orientation, trade union membership or political belief.

The BAFA Board of Directors will lead this commitment to develop an organisational culture which values not just people from all sections of the community, but the contribution each individual and diverse organisation can make to our work. We will ensure that our policies and practices are constantly monitored, reviewed and updated to achieve this.

This policy has been produced to prevent any direct or indirect discrimination or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, against anyone associated with British American Football.

**Statement of Intent:**

British American Football Association is fully committed to equality in terms of opportunity and open access. This includes commitment to protecting and tackling discrimination and ensuring that no employee, job applicant, volunteer or member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

**Purpose of the Policy:**

British American Football Association recognises that certain sections of the community have been affected by discrimination and may be denied the opportunity to participate equally and fully in the sport.

**Legal Requirements:**

British American Football Association is required by law not to discriminate against its employees, members or volunteers and recognises its legal obligations under current and relevant acts, including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments to recruitment and employment practices for disabled job applicants or employees.

British American Football Association reserves the right to limit competitions to members who share a characteristic such as age, gender or disability where this is necessary to ensure equitable, safe and equal competition.

**Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation:**

The Equality Act 2010 states that a person is not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have, are associated with or perceived to have any of the protected characteristics.

* ***Direct discrimination:*** Direct discrimination involves treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic than you would treat others in the same circumstances.
* ***Discrimination by association:*** This occurs when a person is discriminated against because they associate, or are associated, with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
* ***Discrimination by perception:*** This is when direct discrimination occurs because others think they possess a protected characteristic.
* ***Indirect discrimination:*** This occurs when a requirement is applied equally to all, but whether intentional or not has a disproportionate and detrimental effect on someone with a particular protected characteristic, when this cannot be objectively justified.
* ***Harassment:*** Harassment can be described as inappropriate behaviour related to a protected characteristic that is objectionable or causes offence.
* ***Harassment by a third party:*** The Equality Act 2010 specifies that employers are potentially liable for harassment of their staff by a third party on the basis of the protected characteristics. This applies when the harassment has occurred on two or more occasions and where the employer has failed to take reasonably practicable action to prevent or stop it.
* ***Victimisation:*** Victimisation is when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint, or it is believed they might do.

All employees, members and volunteers have responsibilities to respect, act in accordance with and thereby support and promote the spirit and intentions of this policy.

British American Football Association will take measures to ensure that its employment practices are non-discriminatory. No job applicant or employee will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled people.

Where possible British American Football Association will ensure that suppliers, consultants and advisors used can demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of equality.

**Positive Action:**

British American Football Association may take positive action for any group which share a protected characteristic and are under-represented in the workforce, membership or as participants.

# **2. Policy context**

2.1 Socio-economic and demographic trends in the UK show that the population is ageing, becoming more ethnically diverse and more mobile. Equality and diversity issues are high on the government agenda and form a key tenet of policy development.

2.2 National and regional research studies, reports and initiatives all continue to present a picture of under-representation in sport by these key equality strands. Furthermore, this agenda is supported by legislation, which introduces major responsibilities and rights for groups who commonly experience disadvantage.

2.3 BAFA will abide by the letter of, and apply the spirit of The Equality Act (2010), which seeks to place all relevant equality legislation in one location and includes the aims of the following historic acts:

* Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)
* Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
* Sex Discrimination Acts 1975, 1986 & Gender Re-assignment Regulations 1999
* Race Relations Act 1976 and Amendment Regulations 2003 and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
* Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Amendments 2005
* Human Rights Act 1998
* Children Act 1998
* Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
* Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
* Gender Recognition Act 2004
* Civil Partnership Act 2004
* The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
* Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006
* Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

# **3. Strategic context**

3.1 BAFA’s mission is to maximise the contribution of volunteers to the development of the sport in Great Britain. With thousands of members representing players, coaches, referees, and volunteers, BAFA exists to raise and maintain standards of American Football through advice, education, training and publications. The diversity agenda presents opportunities to recognise and celebrate difference, provide products and services that respond to differing needs and preferences, and promote skilled and diverse workforces. As a representative organisation and a body that seeks to influence the policy agenda, BAFA recognises the importance of embracing equality and diversity issues.

# **4. The BAFA equity and diversity vision**

4.1 From an equality and diversity perspective, BAFA will be a truly open, accessible and diverse organisation. BAFA will become a body that everybody can embrace and participate in, regardless of their background.

4.2 Furthermore, our objective is to ensure that everyone is able to participate fully and contribute their best to the work of BAFA, and do not feel excluded from being able to do so. 4.3 BAFA is committed to ensuring that the sport in Great Britain is available to everyone without unfairness.

4.4 To achieve this we will ensure that:

* Our governance and representative structures are open and encourage participation from a wide range of people within the sport;
* We will identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers to entry and opportunities within our sport, save from any legal or regulatory impediment;
* Our education and membership policies provide access points for everyone;
* Our professional development and policy activities are accessible and relevant to everyone;
* BAFA personnel understand the strategic vision and are equipped with the necessary skills and support to ensure we meet our objectives;
* We communicate our message effectively and appropriately so that people understand the BAFA commitment to equality and diversity;
* We are accountable for our actions.

# **5. Actions**

5.1 Specifically, BAFA is committed to the following actions:

* Producing, maintaining and progressing an action plan to ensure delivery of this policy;
* Ensuring the objectives of the Action Plan are owned by the BAFA Directorate, and are written to ‘SMARTER’ standards: Specific; Measurable; Agreed; Realistic; Timed; Exciting; Reviewed;
* Ensuring that BAFA’s constituent directorates are included within the action plan, and that the plan is subject to constant assurance and review;
* Recognising that positive action to tackle under-representation is a key tool for delivery;
* Close adherence to *The Equality Standard for Sport: A Framework for Sport* (Sport England, 2004) to ensure that we can chart our continuous improvement against relevant standards.

Additionally, BAFA will measure and monitor performance in eliminating discrimination and in implementing good practice. BAFA will monitor this policy annually and review it every two years. As a minimum BAFA will collect equality profiling information against the criteria set out in the Equality Standard for Sport annually and conduct an equality impact assessment of this and other relevant policies every two years.

# **6. Discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

6.1 BAFA is committed to ensuring that its employees, contractors, members, participants and volunteers are able to conduct their activities free from harassment or intimidation.

6.2 Decisions made about any individual, will be those that, as well as being consistent with relevant legislation, are necessary to the proper performance of the objective concerned.

6.3 BAFA regards discrimination, harassment or victimisation as serious misconduct and any employee, volunteer or member who discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action within the parameters of the Disciplinary Code.

# **7. Responsibility and implementation**

The following responsibilities will apply:

7.1 The Board is responsible for ensuring that this Equality Policy is followed and to deal with any actual or potential breaches.

7.2 There will be a nominated ‘Equality Champion’ at Board level who has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equality Policy and for achieving the equality action plan (these responsibilities are clearly detailed within relevant job descriptions and work programmes).

7.3 All employees, volunteers, members and participants have responsibilities to respect, act in accordance with and thereby support and promote the spirit and intentions of the policy. Where appropriate, individual work programmes will be amended to include equality related tasks.

7.4 The new/amended policy will be implemented immediately following Board agreement. At a corporate level, it will result in the following:

* A copy of this document will be available to all staff (both permanent and contract), members, coaches, referees and volunteers of BAFA;
* BAFA will ensure that its employment and selection practices are non-discriminatory;
* No applicant for any position within BAFA or its associates will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the position;
* A planned approach will be adopted to eliminate discriminatory barriers;
* BAFA will ensure that consultants and advisers demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of equality.

This will also apply to contractors and procurement policies and practices.

# **8. Communication**

8.1 The new/revised policy will be communicated in the following ways:

* It will be part of a BAFA Handbook (BAFA Rules for Member Organisations) and reference will be made to it in the Disciplinary Code;
* It will be covered in all staff and volunteer induction training;
* All members will be made aware of the policy’s existence when they join, and a summary of any revisions will be published in BAFA newsletters;
* It will be available on the website of the Governing Body and, in particular, referenced within a section dedicated to diversity and equality on the BAFA website;
* All BAFA participants will be eligible to contribute to policy review
* procedures.

# **9. Monitoring and evaluation**

9.1 This policy will remain valid until a proposal or legislative change prompts a review or amendment. In the absence of this, a formal review will take place every two years.

9.2 The Board will be updated as to the progression of the policy, on a quarterly basis.

9.3 Policy impact evidence will be published bi-annually, and this analysis will be supported by statistics

9.4 British American Football Association will monitor and evaluate the policy, practices, procedures and operation on an ongoing basis for its impact.

9.5 The Chair has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

# **10. Disciplinary and grievance procedures**

10.1 British American Football Association regards discrimination, harassment or victimisation as serious misconduct and will take appropriate disciplinary action when necessary against any employee, member or volunteer who violates this policy.

10.2 To safeguard individual rights under the policy, an employee, member or volunteer who believes they have suffered or witnessed discrimination, harassment or victimisation within the scope of the policy may raise the matter through the appropriate procedure.

10.3 British American Football Association expect this policy to be adhered to and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, member or volunteer who violates this policy.

10.4 Everyone should feel able to raise or support a complaint or grievance in good faith and nobody should be subjected to victimisation or any other detriment for doing so.

10.5 Anyone who believes that inequitable treatment has adversely affected them or another may raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure detailed within the respective foundation member documents; the BAFA rule book or through enquiry from the designated Equality champion. They will not be penalised unless any grievance is untrue and not made in good

faith.

10.6 Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, volunteer, member or organisation that violates BAFA’s Equality Policy.

10.7 As with all grievance procedures, the final point of appeal relating to this policy is a BAFA Appeals Committee.