



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Version number	001	Version expiry	01-Dec-2025	Document Type	POL Policies	Document ID	HR-POL-06-001
Version date	01-Dec-2023	Version status	Live document	Business Area	HR	Document classification	INTERNAL USE ONLY

Preface and document control

This document is intended to provide information in respect of SAFC policy, procedure, standards or guidance and will be periodically updated to reflect any changes due to business requirements or infrastructure. Neither all nor part of this document shall be reproduced or released for commercial purposes by a recipient without the express consent of the stated SAFC document owner. This document **MUST** be reviewed and approved by the designated SAFC document approver(s) to ensure technical accuracy and business validity prior to publication.

Document owner and approver(s)

Owner	Head of HR COO
Approver(s)	Board

Version control

Version	Version date	Document History
001	01 December 2023	Policy Implemented

External use

The document owner must approve any request for a copy of this document to be released to an external party. Consideration must be given to the content and classification of this document before authorisation is granted. The owner of this document must state the distribution format(s), copying permissions and procedures for document return or disposal.

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Commitment

3.0 Legislation

4.0 Reporting

1.0 Introduction

This policy refers to Sunderland Association Football Clubs ('the Club', 'SAFC', 'our', 'we') commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ('EDI') and the club's journey with it.

The Football League is responsible for setting the standards, values and expectations of all Clubs in relation to equality, inclusion and diversity. Football is for everyone; it belongs too and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it, whether as a player, official, staff member, volunteer or spectator.

The aim of Sunderland AFC Equality Policy is to promote our own equality objectives and in doing so, help to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect. All Sunderland AFC representatives should abide by and adhere to this Policy and to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. In doing so, we are working towards being legally compliant in relation to equality legislation.

1.1 EDI

Equality, diversity and inclusion is the fostering of and creating environments which encourage individuals to achieve their full potential whilst challenging myths and stereotypes and continuing to learn about each other and our differences.

The club takes a zero-tolerance approach in relation to the discrimination of any protected characteristic which an individual may have and this includes the following:

- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Transgender reassignment
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marital/civil partner status
- Disability

2.0 Commitment

Sunderland AFC's commitment is to promote inclusion and to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality, ethnicity (race), religion or belief, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity and to encourage equal opportunities. These are known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

This Policy is fully supported by the Board of Sunderland AFC and Steve Davison, Chief Operating Officer, is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Sunderland AFC 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, official, spectator, fan and visiting teams 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.

Sunderland AFC's understanding of the club's place at the heart of the community is clearly demonstrated by the wide ranging and long standing work of the Foundation of Light, throughout the North-East region and beyond. Working in partnership with key organisations such as 'Show Racism the Red Card' and 'Kick It Out', under the 'One Game One Community' banner, further demonstrates SAFC's positive contribution to the creation of a fair and balanced society, with enhanced community cohesion.

Our commitment to inclusion is clear. The gates welcoming people to the Stadium of Light say 'FOR US ALL.' This is the spirit we cherish at Sunderland Association Football Club - we welcome everyone

The club has put many years' hard work into this fundamental policy and the club is committed to actively promoting this ethos and encouraging all supporters to embrace this.

2.1 SAFC Dignity at Work

Sunderland AFC operates a policy of zero tolerance towards all forms of discrimination and anti-social behaviour which is outlined within both this policy as well as the Club's Dignity at Work Policy.

2.2 Equal Opportunities

We believe that everyone has the right to be employed by our football club and attend football matches at the Stadium of Light in a safe, welcoming and friendly environment - and that means all members of our community, regardless of their religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Diversity is something to be celebrated and inclusion for all is central to what we do.

Sunderland AFC is an equal opportunity employer.

We are committed to a policy of treating all employees and job applicants equally.

Our aim is that all colleagues should be able to work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

2.3 Safeguarding Adults and Children at Risk

- We recognises that the safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk is of paramount importance within the organisation.
- Sunderland AFC owes a duty of care to safeguard all children and adults at risk involved in activities as organised by the football club.
- The club will ensure that safety and protection is given to all children and adults at risk involved in activities through adherence to the Safeguarding guidelines adopted by the Club.

2.4 Positive Action and Training

Sunderland AFC is committed to equality inclusion and anti-discrimination as part of The Football League's Code of Practice.

Sunderland AFC will commit to a programme of raising awareness and educating, investigating concerns and applying relevant and proportionate sanctions, 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. This Equality Policy will be reviewed and updated, if required, on an annual basis.

2.5 Complaints and compliance

Sunderland AFC regards all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is concerned to ensure that 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 employee, member or volunteer, spectator or fan who is found, after a full investigation, to have violated the Equality Policy.

3.0 Legislation; the Equality Act 2010

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.

The Equality Act 2010 is a new law which harmonises where possible, and in some cases extends, 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 (employment only until 2012), disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status (employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

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.

3.1 Discrimination Forms

Direct discrimination: can be described as less favourable treatment on the grounds of one of the protected characteristics.

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.

3.2. Discriminatory Behaviour

3.2.2 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.

3.2.3 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.

3.2.4 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.

4.0 Reporting

Fans, employees and all visitors to the club are encouraged, if they hear or see any racist or any other form of discriminatory abuse at the Stadium of Light to report this, which can be reported in a number of ways.

1. Contact your nearest steward in confidence at the time of the incident,
2. Contact the club to report an incident via telephoning **0371 911 1973** or email enquiries@safc.com.
3. Contact Kick It Out on **0800 169 9414** by emailing report@kickitout.org, or by visiting www.kickitout.org.

Sunderland Association Football Club
www.safc.com