

# THE CONNAUGHT CLUB EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

November 2021

## 1. Introduction

The Equality and Diversity Policy of the Connaught Club (the '**Club**') is closely linked to the Club's mission statement:

"The Club's mission is to create an inclusive environment for members and their guests to: enjoy playing sport, develop their skills in sport and compete, and achieve their sporting aims and be the best players they can be!"

This policy sets out the Connaught Club's approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination. It applies to all aspects of any engagement with the Club, and to recruitment of staff, coaches, Members, Senior Officers, Connaught Management Committee ('**CMC**') Members and Section Committee Members. It also covers the treatment and conduct of volunteers.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Club's Code of Conduct which sets out standards of accepted conduct, including for equality and diversity.

## 2. Club Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

The Connaught Club values and respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.

The Senior Officers, CMC Members, Section Committee Members, the Members, staff, coaches, volunteers and representatives of the Club must recognise and fulfil their personal role in making the Connaught Club a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation.

The Connaught Club is committed to ensuring that equality is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so it acknowledges and adopts the following Sport England definition of sports equity.

"Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to all members of society, whatever their age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality or socio-economic status."

The Connaught Club is committed to:

- Equality of opportunity
- Tackling discrimination and disadvantage
- Tackling harassment and intimidation
- Making the organisation as a whole more representative of the diverse communities that make up our beneficial class
- Ensuring everyone has the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of discrimination, intimidation, harassment and abuse; and
- Delivering a positive experience for everyone.

The Connaught Club will not tolerate less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, gender, gender reassignment, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, criminal record, place of residence, religion, faith or other beliefs, health status or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified. The Club will never use cultural practices as a justification for, or to ignore an issue of, safeguarding.

All Club Members, management, staff, coaches, volunteers and visitors are required to comply with the legal requirements relating to the elimination of discriminatory practices including harassment and victimisation.

All Club Members, staff / coaches and volunteers have a responsibility to challenge discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.

Members, staff, coaches and volunteers are required to follow the Club's reporting procedure referred to below.

The Connaught Club will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously and promptly, according to this Policy and the Club's Members Complaints and Disciplinary Policy / Staff Handbook as applicable.

### **3. The Legal Requirements**

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in certain specified contexts, including (inter alia) at their work and as members of a private club. The Act identifies nine "Protected Characteristics" – namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief), sex and sexual orientation.

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of any of these Protected Characteristics. People are also protected from discrimination if they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic, (e.g., a family member or friend), or if they have complained about discrimination or supported someone else's complaint.

### **4. Recognising Discrimination**

It is important that Members, staff, coaches and volunteers understand the different types of discrimination, which are prohibited under this policy. These can come in any one of the following forms:

- a. **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a prospective Member, coach or member of staff because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- b. **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, A health club only accepts customers who are on the electoral register. This applies to all customers in the same way. But Gypsies and Travellers are less likely to be on the electoral register and therefore they'll find it more difficult to join. This could be indirect discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers because of the protected characteristic of race. The rule seems fair, but it has a worse effect on this particular group of people.

- c. **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted behaviour related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- d. **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- e. **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.
- f. **Associative discrimination:** is where an individual is discriminated against, harassed, or potentially victimised because of their association with another individual who has a Protected Characteristic as outlined above. For example, where an individual is treated less favourably because they care for an elderly relative (the protected characteristic is age).
- g. **Perceptive discrimination:** is where an individual is discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a Protected Characteristic outlined above when they do not, in fact, have that characteristic.

## 5. Responsibility for implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality and discrimination is everyone's responsibility: not responding to discriminatory or unacceptable language and behaviour is not an option.

The CMC and CMC Chair have ultimate responsibility and overall accountability for the provision and review of this Policy and Reporting Procedure, for being the strategic lead on diversity and inclusion and for ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation.

The Club Manager and Welfare Officer have overall responsibility for implementation of the Policy, developing a strategic and proactive approach to equality and inclusion, and for responding to discrimination concerns. See further details of the role of the Welfare Officer below.

All Members, staff, coaches, volunteers and parents/carers of Members are responsible for complying with this Policy, the Club Rules, Bye-Laws, Code of Conduct and Policies, and for reporting any concerns. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the Senior Officers, CMC Members, Section Committee Members, Members, staff, coaches and volunteers to support the policy by ensuring that the Club's activities promote equality and diversity.

## 6. Club Welfare Officer

The Club Welfare Officer, supported by the Club Manager, is responsible for, in the first instance, dealing with or taking action on disciplinary offences. In addition, the Club Welfare Officer is responsible for ensuring that effective procedures are maintained and for dealing with any concerns in relation to equality and diversity, and also safeguarding.

The designated Club Welfare Officer is Nikki Chesters. See contact details on Club Noticeboard.

The role of the Welfare Officer in relation to equality and diversity is to:

- Be the first point of contact for equality and diversity matters.

- Receive, assess and record information from Club Members, staff, coaches and volunteers who have any concerns, and handle any ensuing investigations and enquiries in accordance with this Policy, the Club's Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and applicable laws.
- Ensure that all staff and coaches are aware of the applicable laws and what to do if they are concerned that discrimination is taking place.
- Provide advice and information to the Club's Senior Officers and Management Committee, contacting the Equality Advisory Support Service on 0808 800 0082 as needed.
- Review and update the Equality and Diversity Policy periodically, in line with legislative and Club developments.

In the absence of the Club Welfare Officer, the Club Manager or CMC Chair may be contacted.

## **7. Recruitment and Selection**

The Club will ensure that recruitment practices fulfil the requirement of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

If there are staff or coaching vacancies that are not filled through the Club's network of contacts, they will be generally advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. All posts will have a job description and person specification, which will contain essential and desirable skills, qualifications and experience. Person specifications will only contain details which are required. All recruitment adverts will carry the statement "The Connaught Club promotes Equality and Diversity. A copy of our Equality and Diversity Policy will be available on request".

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible. The format for interview will be agreed before it takes place and will remain constant for all interviews for the position.

Every effort will be made to make provision for staff, coaches and volunteers with a disability through reasonable adaptations.

Posts which are deemed suitable will be advertised as available for job share. Job shares may also be available to staff in suitable posts on request, and providing that a suitable job sharer may be recruited.

All staff, coaches and Senior Officers / CMC Members involved in recruitment and selection will be aware of this policy and adhere to it at all times. All applicants for posts will be treated strictly on merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. As an exception, posts targeted at specific groups of people will be exempted, as allowed by legislation.

An appointed person will be responsible for vetting, in confidence, applicants for sensitive posts; this may include Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Reasons for the decision to appoint, or not, will be noted and kept for at least six months.

Sensitive posts include coaching and those roles in which persons may work and/or volunteer directly or indirectly with individuals aged 18 years or younger and/or with vulnerable adults. Sensitive posts may also include those roles in which persons may have access to individuals who are aged 18 years or younger or vulnerable adults and/or such individuals' personal data.

## **8. Part-time and fixed-term work**

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

## **9. Disabilities**

If an employee is disabled or becomes disabled, they are encouraged to talk about their condition so that reasonable adjustments or support may be considered as appropriate.

## **10. Training and Development**

The Senior Officers, CMC Members, staff, coaches and volunteers need to recognise and fulfil their personal role in making the Club a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation. The Club will ensure that all staff, coaches and volunteers know about the Equality and Diversity policy and their responsibilities within it, by including it within Induction Training, and ensuring it has a high profile within the Club's internal communications and practices.

Additional role specific training may be undertaken to ensure understanding of and commitment to Equality & Diversity policies and procedures as appropriate.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Reporting Process**

If you suspect that discrimination has or is taking place you must report the matter to the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible. This obligation applies even if the alleged activity does not relate directly to you i.e., you heard or saw something, or someone else disclosed the matter to you. The Welfare Officer may ask you to make an objective and accurate note in writing of what was said, record the date, time and any names that were involved or mentioned, and sign it. The Club has an open approach to concerns. Members, staff, coaches and volunteers may also use the Club Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure to report concerns. The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure is displayed on the Club Noticeboard in the Pavilion.

## **12. Safeguarding**

The Club maintains a separate Safeguarding Policy which covers broader issues in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, but also includes discrimination and harassment matters. The Safeguarding Policy includes a similar reporting process to that for reporting concerns about Equality and Diversity. Certain safeguarding matters may also be reportable to the Lawn Tennis Association or other applicable sports' governing bodies. The Club Welfare Officer will advise on any overlap. Please see the Club Safeguarding Policy for further information.

## **13. Response by Welfare Officer**

The Club Welfare Officer will be in charge of all equality and diversity inquiries and investigations. They will keep accurate records of all equality and diversity concerns and reports and will keep sensitive and confidential information secure, in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the Club's Privacy Policy. Information and records of any allegation will only be communicated and shared with those who need to know about the incident. Disclosure will not be kept for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for consideration and resolution of any disputes. Records may be held for longer where dispute resolution processes are ongoing. Where a concern is raised or if it becomes known that a member of staff, coach or Club Member is under investigation for matters of discrimination, the Welfare Officer may decide, in liaison with the CMC Chair and the Club Manager, whether the individual's employment,

contract for coaching services and/or Club membership should be suspended pending the results of the investigation.

#### **14. Breaches of the Policy**

Actions taken by Club Members, staff, coaches or visitors that are in breach of this Policy will be addressed without delay in accordance with this Policy.

Breaches by Members will be subject to the Club's Members Complaints and Disciplinary Policy. Ultimately the outcome may include suspension or termination of membership.

Breaches by Members of staff and coaches will be subject to the disciplinary procedure in the Staff Handbook. Ultimately the outcome may include termination of employment or services contract.

The Club Manager, relevant Section Captain (or Vice-Captain) or any of the Club's Senior Officers or CMC Members may ask a visitor who is believed to be in breach of this Policy to leave the Club's premises immediately. Ultimately the outcome may include temporary exclusion or permanent barring from the Club.

No-one may be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the Club's disciplinary procedures.

#### **Connaught Management Committee**

**November 2021**

**V1.0**