PADDLE ENGLAND AFFILIATED CLUB

Cuckmere Valley Canoe Club

EQUALITY POLICY

APPROVED: April 2026

NEXT REVIEW: April 2027

Club Equality Policy

Cuckmere Valley Canoe Club

Introduction

This Equality Policy outlines the commitment Cuckmere Valley Canoe Club ("the Club") makes to equality, as well as detailing what this means in practice and the steps that will be taken if people within the paddling community fall short of the commitments outlined. The Club is committed to applying these principles of equality across paddlesport to ensure everyone can partake in paddlesport and realise their full potential in an equitable and welcoming environment.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are part of the underpinning values of Paddle England and the Club, and we recognise our responsibility to tackle exclusion and discrimination wherever it occurs. This responsibility extends to our members, volunteers, participants, supporters, coaches and anyone else involved in the Club's activities.

Equality Policy Statement

The Club is fully committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and aims to ensure that everyone has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate in paddlesport at all levels and in all roles within the sport. The Club adopts the principles of Paddle England's Equality Policy (2022) and believes that everyone should be treated equally regardless of; age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("Protected Characteristics").

In addition, the Club will endeavour to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunities regardless of their socio-economic background.

Commitments

The Club recognises its responsibility to act on the commitments outlined in this policy, and will ensure the policy is "lived" by undertaking, as a minimum, the following actions:

- Providing appropriate training to all of its volunteers, coaches and committee members to raise awareness of individual responsibilities;
- Making this policy available to all volunteers, coaches, committee members, and members through its website, newsletters and other club communications. The policy is also publicised to volunteers and members through handbooks or inductions.
- Committing to working towards equitable and accessible paddling opportunities to all sections of the Club's local community, and avoiding disadvantaging any person by conditions or requirements that cannot be reasonably justified;
- Embedding equal opportunities into all Club policies and plans, and assessing the impact of this work on various communities, including protected characteristic groups.

Legal Responsibilities

As a membership association or organisation with 25 or more members, the Club is required by law, not to unlawfully discriminate against its Stakeholders. The Club recognises its legal obligations under, and will abide by, the requirements of, the Equality Act 2010, as well as any equivalent or amended equality related legislation that may be relevant and applicable to The Club.

In line with Paddle UK, the Club considers that paddlesport is a gender affected activity under the Equality Act 2010. In this regard, the Equality Act 2010 permits the separation of competitors, or the imposition of entry restrictions upon paddlers on the basis of age, sex, disability or nationality. This is permitted where it is necessary to do so to ensure;

- fair competition, or
- the safety of competitors, or
- compliance with the rules of a national or international competition, or
- selection can be made to represent a country, place or area or a related association.

Whilst there are instances where it is necessary and proportionate for certain restrictions to be imposed within competitive sport, the Club and Paddle England strive to ensure a fair balance at all times between this need to uphold the safe and equitable delivery of sport and the principle of equal access for all, as well as its legal and moral responsibility to avoid unlawful discrimination.

Types of Unlawful Discrimination

The Club recognises that unlawful discrimination is unacceptable and will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional. The Club considers any form of unlawful discrimination as serious misconduct, and any volunteer, coach, committee member, member, or other person involved in the club activities who unlawfully discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action.

Unlawful discrimination can take the following forms:

- **Direct Discrimination:** treating a person less favourably than others would be treated in the same circumstances on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic they possess.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** occurs when there's a practice, policy or rule which applies in the same way for everybody, but has a disproportionate and detrimental effect or particularly disadvantages people with a certain Protected Characteristic. In such circumstances the person with the Protected Characteristic will be indirectly discriminated against if they are put at that disadvantage, unless the person applying the practice, policy or rule can objectively justify it.
- **Discrimination by perception:** occurs when a person is discriminated against because they are thought to have a particular Protected Characteristic.

- **Discrimination by association:** occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with a Protected Characteristic.
- **Harassment:** described as inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that are objectionable or cause offence to the recipient or any other individual affected by such conduct.
- **Bullying:** described as the misuse of power, the act of criticising persistently or to humiliate and undermine an individual's confidence.
- **Victimisation:** described as when one person is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action under one of the relevant Acts / Regulations or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

Implementation

A copy of the policy will be made available to all volunteers, coaches, committee members and members of the Club. The policy will be integrated into the induction for key volunteers. The policy will also be made available on the Club's website or media channels.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Club recognises that it has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. The Club will consider all requests for adjustments and where possible will accommodate reasonable requests and will work with any affected parties to implement any adjustments that will enable them to participate more fully in all Club activities.

Complaints and Disciplinary

The Club takes any breach of this policy by any person very seriously, with any breach being dealt with in accordance with the Club's disciplinary, complaint or grievance procedure, and referred to Paddle UK when appropriate. Where any violation of this equality policy amounts to a criminal offence, the appropriate authority will be informed. If any employee, member, volunteer or official believes they have suffered discrimination or other inequitable treatment within the scope of the policy, they can raise their concerns via the Club, or via email to equality@paddleuk.org.uk. Referrals will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated as appropriate.

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