



## **Statement from the Board**

Reading Football Club is committed to identify, confront and eliminate discrimination, whether by reason of race, colour, nationality, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, age, ethnic and national origin, pregnancy or maternity, disability or gender reassignment.

Reading Football Club intends to ensure that everyone who wishes to engage with the club, whether as match-days fans, staff, players, board members, participants in foundation programmes and any other person engaged with the club's activities, has a real and equal opportunity to do so.

Reading Football Club is an equal opportunities employer. We aim to ensure that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria, and that staff feel valued and are able to achieve their full potential.

## **Equality Statement**

Reading Football Club endorses the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in the club whether as players, match-day fans, staff, board members, participants in foundation programmes and other people engaged with the club's activities (for example, suppliers, corporate partners) has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation; and can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to enjoy their engagement at the club without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment, bullying and abuse.

## **Legal obligations**

Reading Football Club is committed to avoiding and eliminating unfair discrimination of any kind in the club, and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, victimisation or bullying. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Appendix.

## **Positive action**

As well as complying with legislation clubs should promote 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.

Reading Football Club 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.



### **Implementation**

The following steps will be taken to publicise this policy and promote equality in Reading Football Club:

- o A copy of this document will be published on the Reading Football Club website
- o The Reading Football Club board will take overall accountability for ensuring that the policy is observed

The Reading Football Club board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the club.

Reading Football Club will implement regular audits, surveys or other initiatives designed 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.

Reading Football Club will provide access to a rolling programme of training for all its players, staff, board members, and other people engaged with the club's activities to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities.

It will be a condition of working with Reading Football Club that suppliers:

- o Commit to act in accordance with this policy; and
- o Support such measures and initiatives that Reading Football Club may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy

### **Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Reading Football Club board will be accountable for ensuring the implementation of this policy. The CEO and Equality Lead will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of equality in the club.

The CEO and Equality Lead will review all Reading Football Club activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy and should report formally on this issue to the Board annually.

The CEO and Equality lead will review any measures or initiatives that Reading Football Club may institute or take part in to promote and enhance equality in the club, and will report their findings annually to the Reading Football Club board.

The Reading Football Club board itself will review the policy at intervals of no more than three years, (or when necessary due to changes in legislation) in line with the Reading Football Club policy review process.

### **Complaints and compliance**

Reading Football Club considers all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is concerned with ensuring individuals feel able to raise any grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any player, match-day fan, staff, board member, participant in community programmes and other people engaged with the club's activities who violate the Reading Football Club Equality Policy.

## Reading Football Club | Equality Policy



Any person who believes that he or she has been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by a player, match-day fan, staff, board member, participant in community programmes and other people engaged with the club's activities should, in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against the individual or Reading Football Club itself, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the following Club representatives at Reading Football Club, Madejski Stadium, Junction 11 M4, reading, RG2 0FL:

Jackie Evans – Senior Manager for Equality [jevans@readingfc.co.uk](mailto:jevans@readingfc.co.uk)

Sandra Clark – Equality Manager [sclark@readingfc.co.uk](mailto:sclark@readingfc.co.uk)

Ken Bull – Lead Officer for Equality [kbull@readingfc.co.uk](mailto:kbull@readingfc.co.uk)

Reading Football Club will appoint a person to investigate the complaint. The investigation will be conducted impartially, confidentially, and without avoidable delay. 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.

The parties in question will be notified of the outcome of investigation, in writing, and reported to the Reading Football Club board. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of a person or organisation, Reading Football Club may impose sanctions on that person or organisation in line with its policies. Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct extending to temporary or permanent expulsion from club activities. In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the board will consider the severity of the matter and take into account any mitigating circumstances.

Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amount to a criminal offence, the appropriate authority will be informed.

In the event that an individual or organisation associated with Reading Football Club is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the board will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action as above in relation to the matter concerned.

Reading Football Club

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'R. Gourlay'.

Date:

31/5/2018

Ron Gourlay CEO



## **APPENDIX – Relevant legislation and forms of unacceptable discrimination**

### **Legal rights**

Discrimination has been legally defined through the Equality Act 2010.

In April 2010, the Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent. The Equality Act 2010 is a law which harmonised where possible, and in some cases extended, 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, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on grounds of' a protected characteristic. This means that individuals will be protected if they have a characteristic, are assumed to have it, associate with someone who has it or are 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.

#### **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.

#### **Discrimination arising from disability**

It is unlawful when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and such unfavourable treatment cannot be justified. This type of discrimination only relates to disability.

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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.