

Special Olympics Great Britain Equality & Diversity Policy Statement

Special Olympics Great Britain (SOGB) is committed to achieving equality and diversity in both employment and the services it provides. No user of SOGB's services, including employees, athletes, volunteers, other service users or job applicants, should receive less favourable treatment because of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage & civil partnership;
- Pregnancy & maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex & sexual orientation; or
- Any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

1.1 As an employer and provider of services to the community, SOGB accepts the responsibility to promote equality and diversity and challenge discrimination whenever and wherever it occurs.

1.2 It is the responsibility of all employees, athletes, volunteers and service users to ensure that no other employee, athlete, volunteer or service user receives less favourable treatment than any other on any of the grounds stated above.

1.3 SOGB recognises that some athletes and/or service users may, because of the nature of their disability, say or do things which would otherwise be considered unacceptable and incompatible with this Equality and Diversity Policy Statement. In this instance, SOGB, its employees and volunteers will do all it can to challenge such behaviour through means of a gentle approach to intervention, aimed at altering attitudes whilst at the same time, maintaining support for the athlete and service user.

2. Responsibility

2.1 The Board of Trustees of SOGB have overall responsibility for the effective operation and review of this policy statement. However, all employees, athletes, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with SOGB to do everything they can to ensure this policy statement is upheld and works in practice.

2.2 Employees of SOGB shall have overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy, with the Equality & Diversity Officer reporting to the Board on an annual basis.

2.3 Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work within SOGB are also responsible for ensuring that all volunteers are aware of this SOGB Equality and Diversity Policy Statement and that they adhere to it in all of their activities as an SOGB Volunteer.

3. Positive Action

3.1 SOGB believes that passive support for equality and diversity is not enough and that positive steps must be taken. SOGB is committed to:

- Recognising and developing potential which has not been utilised before because of past discrimination and disadvantage in society as a whole.
- Encouraging access and applications from disadvantaged groups, subject to eligibility.

4. Dealing with Complaints

4.1 If any employee, athlete, volunteer or service user feels they have been, or are being, discriminated against in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter in accordance with SOGB's Grievance & Mediation Policy. Concerns can also be raised in accordance with the SOGB Whistleblowing and Complaints Policies.

4.2 All instances of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated seriously and may involve invoking SOGB's disciplinary procedures.

5. Recruitment

5.1 SOGB will ensure that all job adverts are circulated widely and include an equality and diversity statement.

5.2 SOGB will ensure that all job descriptions and person specifications reflect only the requirements of the role and they will make it clear that life and work experience, as well as formal qualifications, is valid and valued.

5.3 SOGB will actively encourage people with learning disabilities to apply, thus offering additional opportunities to people with learning disabilities within the delivery of its services.

5.4 In the interests of operating an effective equality and diversity policy, SOGB will monitor certain information about job applicants and volunteers. All such information will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with Data Protection legislation and will be clearly separated from all processes concerned with the selection of employees and volunteers.

6. Working Conditions

6.1 SOGB will endeavour to maintain working conditions and practices that support equality and diversity. This includes, but is not limited to, fostering an inclusive culture, preventing unconscious bias, supporting and providing reasonable adjustments and adopting flexible hours and working patterns.

7. Use of Language

7.1 Employees, athletes, volunteers and service users will avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles any other employee, athlete, volunteer or service user.

7.2 Where language used has a personal impact on others and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

7.3 All materials produced and used by SOGB will be developed in a way that promotes equality and diversity.

8. Bullying and Harassment

8.1 No SOGB employee, athlete, volunteer or service user should be subject to bullying and/or harassment of any nature including, but not limited to, verbal abuse, insults, threats, intimidation, physical contact and remarks, jokes, actions or behaviours which are unwelcome or an individual finds offensive. Disciplinary action may be taken against any individual who engages in any type of bullying and harassment.

9. Equality & Diversity Officer

9.1 An Equality & Diversity Officer will be appointed by SOGB to advise, inform and consult with management, employees, athletes, volunteers and service users in order to progress, improve and promote equality and diversity within SOGB.

9.2 The Equality & Diversity Officer will:

- Work with SOGB stakeholders to monitor and report on SOGB's equality and diversity development, progress and practice.
- Ensure employees, athletes, volunteers and service users have an awareness and understanding of equality and diversity practices within SOGB and receive appropriate and relevant training dependent on their role.
- Advise and consult with management and the SOGB Board on equality and diversity issues and practices and be available in an advisory capacity in the case of a grievance or complaint involving equality and diversity issues.

9.3 It is not intended that the Equality & Diversity Officer represent particular views, opinions or interests of individuals or groups, nor have the authority within this role to discipline employees, athletes, volunteers or service users, or raise a grievance on behalf of a particular individual or group.

10. Policy Statement Review

10.1 This Policy Statement will be reviewed in accordance with the Trustee rolling policy review schedule unless changes in legislation or any other significant changes require an earlier review.