Striving for equality in sport

Foreward

Active Surrey (AS) recognises the value of sport and the important role it plays in enhancing the quality of life.

We are committed to increasing lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity across the county and to improving standards and experiences through establishing a strong, sustainable infrastructure for sport in Surrey.

Our vision is to “make Surrey a more active and successful sporting county” and we are committed to ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all those who wish to start, stay and succeed in sport.

We are using The Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport to support us in realising this aim and in achieving continuous improvement in our equality work.

Endorsement

This policy was formally adopted following endorsement by the AS Management Group in October 2006.

The English Federation of Disability Sport, Sporting Equals, Women’s Sports Foundation and Stonewall were consulted during development of this equality policy. All four equity agencies have provided their support and endorsement.

What is sports equity?

- Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them.
- Sports equity is about making sure that people can realise their talent and fulfil their potential.
- Sports equity is about using the power of sport to engage, unite and motivate people, promote social inclusion and improve health.
- Sports equity is about individual and organisational responsibility to challenge discriminatory practice and promote inclusion.

Policy statement

AS firmly believes that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, parental or marital status, religious belief, class or social background, sexual preference or political belief.

AS will ensure that there is equal access and choice for everyone wishing to be involved in sport and physical activity, whether as a participant or as a volunteer, as well as for all those wishing to follow a career in sport and leisure. AS acknowledges that inequalities exist and will take positive action to minimise them.

AS will act as a ‘champion’ for sports equity in Surrey and will lead by example. AS will actively promote the principles of equality of opportunity and will influence others through the
promotion of good practice. AS is dedicated to working with local partner organisations to achieve a co-ordinated approach for improving open access to sport for all.

**Why a policy?**

AS recognises that certain sections of the community have been affected by past discrimination and may be denied the opportunity to participate equally and fully in sport at all levels.

This policy has been produced to support the establishment of a working and sporting culture that seeks, respects, values and harnesses difference to the benefit of all. It is a framework through which we will positively eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, ensure that everyone is treated fairly and ensure that equality of access and choice become truly embedded within the work of AS.

This policy has also been developed in line with legal responsibilities and requirements set out within equality legislation namely the Sex Discrimination Act 1999, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Gender Recognition Act 2004, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Age Discrimination Act 2006.

**Policy objectives**

**Corporate objectives**

- AS will ensure that there is strong organisational commitment to equality, which is clearly reflected in the culture, policies, working practices, attitudes and behaviours.

**Management practices**

- AS will ensure that commitment and responsibility for equality is placed at the most senior levels within the organisation.
- AS will develop systems for regularly assessing performance and supporting continuous improvement in equality.

**Employment**

- AS will follow the employment policies and practices of its host organisation, Surrey County Council, which include Action for Equality Policy, Code of Conduct, Complaints procedure; Fairness and Dignity at Work procedure; Speaking Out Policy; Promoting Self-Reliance Policy; Disciplinary and Dismissals procedure.
- AS will ensure that employees with line management responsibilities receive training on equitable recruitment, employment and management policies and practices.
- The AS Equality Policy will form part of the employee handbook, partner induction pack and coach induction pack and will be discussed at induction training sessions.

**Service planning and delivery**

- AS will respect the rights and needs of all local communities.
- AS will work with local partners and communities to clearly understand barriers to participation in sport in Surrey and develop solutions to overcome them.
- AS will allocate resources to actively raise participation among under-represented groups.
- AS will seek to actively involve equity partners and representatives from under-represented groups in service planning.
Training and development

- AS will assess the development needs of its staff and provide appropriate training to ensure that they have the required skills, knowledge and support to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities in relation to sports equity.
- AS will work with partners to ensure that sports equity training is accessible to all sports club representatives, sports centre staff, coaches, volunteers, teachers, administrators and officials.
- AS will actively encourage coaches, volunteers, teachers and sports administrators to attend sports equity training.

Marketing and promotion

- AS will follow best practice principles in the design and production of marketing materials.
- AS will ensure that information can be made available in a range of formats.
- AS will ensure that information is conveyed to all sections of the community by using a range of methods and channels of communication.

Implementing the policy

The AS Management Team will oversee the effective implementation of this policy and all employees have responsibility for its practical execution.

‘Fairness in Sport’ and ‘Equality of Opportunity’ form core strands within the AS Strategic Framework. Specific objectives and targets featured in annual delivery plans will underpin implementation of the AS Equality Policy.

AS will strongly encourage partners to support and, where appropriate, adopt this policy.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be formally reviewed every 3 years unless any proposal to the AS Management Team or legislation change requires an interim review and/or amendment.

To ensure the effectiveness of our Equality Policy we will carry out regular monitoring. We will monitor our workforce to find out whether it broadly reflects our local communities and to ensure our practices are free from discrimination. We will monitor those accessing our services to determine whether they are reaching the wider community. We will also seek feedback from employees, partners, service users and community representatives.

Core team delivery plans will be monitored and reviewed through monthly and 6-monthly line management meetings as well as annually via the service planning and business planning process. Progress against success factors will be presented annually at partner conference events and in the AS annual report.

Overall policy implementation will be monitored and evaluated on a 6-monthly basis by the Physical Activity and Inclusion Officer with findings reported to the AS Management team. Mechanisms will be put in place to enable staff, partners and other stakeholders to be part of the policy review process.
Disciplinary and grievance procedures

To safeguard individual rights under this policy any employee, partner representative, participant, coach or volunteer who believes they have experienced discrimination (including bullying or harassment) or unfair practices while working for AS, working with AS or accessing its services may raise the matter as follows:

- Employees - using the ‘Fairness and Dignity at Work’ procedure
- Partner representative/participant/coach/volunteer – using the AS Complaints Procedure

It is important that an individual’s experience is recorded and that the incident is resolved. Complaints will be taken seriously and AS will take action where this policy is breached. Breaches by employees of this policy will be treated as a serious offence, and may lead to disciplinary action, in accordance with agreed procedures.

AS encourages employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Partnership’s work to come forward and voice those concerns. AS promotes use of Surrey County Council’s ‘Speaking Out’ Policy, which makes it clear that an individual can raise concerns regarding malpractice or wrongdoing without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

If you require further information on this policy or would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact us: active.surrey@surreycc.gov.uk