



GENDER AND EQUALITY POLICY

Revision History

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1.0	29 th September 2021	SSRP Board	New Document
2.0	Sept 2023	SSRP Board	Section 1.0 Additional information Section 3.0 Ref Act Section 3.2 3-Type of discrimination Section 3.4 New

Document Control

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1.0 Policy Statement

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (SSRP) is committed to equality and dignity for all, both as an employer and as a service provider and believes in the vital contribution of diversity and difference to the effectiveness of the organisation. We strive to ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer, or service user is discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on the basis of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community. These are the nine grounds as outlined in the Employment Equality Act 1998. In Ireland, discrimination has a specific meaning under the Employment Acts 1998-2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015. It is described as “the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds”. We aim to go beyond our legal requirements and proactively create an environment that respects and embraces diversity, taking positive action where necessary to redress equality imbalances.

2.0 General Principles

Scope: The purpose of this policy and procedural guidelines is to provide guidance on all aspects of equality at Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership.

2.1 Responsibility:

The Board and Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All Board members and the Co-ordinator are expected to co-operate and lead by example. All other staff, auxiliary staff and volunteers at SSRP must comply and ensure that equality principles are respected.

2.2 Measures:

These procedures outline the measures that will be taken to ensure that this policy is fully implemented.

2.3 Training and instruction:

SSRP commits to providing or organising training or instruction to staff to facilitate implementation of these policies and procedures.

2.4 Evaluation and review:

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It should be given to the Co-ordinator who will ensure that it is considered by the Board. The document will be reviewed in full consultation with all stakeholders on a regular basis, or as frequently as needed if circumstances change.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Grounds for discrimination:

SSRP recognises discrimination and harassment on one or more of nine specified grounds in the Employment Equality Act 1998, namely:

- gender
- civil status
- family status
- sexual orientation
- religion
- age
- disability
- race
- and membership of the Traveller community

3.2 Types of discrimination:

SSRP accepts that discrimination may be direct, indirect, imputed or by association.

- Direct discrimination may arise where an employer treats a person less favourably than another person would be treated specifically because of membership of one of the nine grounds covered by the Employment Equality Act 1998.
- Indirect discrimination may occur where an employer imposes a provision or requirement which, on the face of it, applies equally to all persons but because of one of the nine grounds a person would have greater difficulty complying with it than other persons without that characteristic. In other words, the requirement provision may appear neutral but has a disproportionate impact.
- Discrimination by association may happen when a person associated with another person, who belongs to a particular ethnic minority, is treated less favourably because of that association.

3.3 Disability:

SSRP adopts the World Health Organisation definition of disability, namely: persons with disabilities are persons who:

- Have a significant and persistent mobility, sensory, learning or other physical or mental health impairment which may be permanent or temporary in nature;
- And experience functional restrictions or limitations of their ability to perform the range of life's activities; and may experience attitudinal and/or environmental barriers that hamper their full and self-directed participation.

3.4 Prejudices, bias and stereotypes:

While legislation sets out the legal environment around obvious discrimination and SSRP's obligations, SSRP are aware that everyone will have unconscious biases where people instinctively categorise other people using easily observed criteria such as age, weight, skin colour and gender. Everyone can and does subconsciously classify people according to a variety of criteria including educational level, disability, sexuality, accent, social status, job title, where they live; automatically assigning presumed traits to anyone that has been subconsciously assigned to a particular group. Biases come in all forms e.g. people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, working parents, etc.

SSRP through this policy will unearth these hidden biases by declaring their intention to be non-biased, ensuring fair and equitable distribution of different types of work and opportunities within the organisation for all staff and volunteers.

4.0 Board Diversity

4.1 General:

To govern well, Boards need to draw on diverse perspectives and generate a variety of alternative viewpoints. The common goal of the Board should be a shared commitment to achieving the very best outcomes for communities across Sligo. If everyone has a similar background, then it becomes hard to take decisions that are in the best interests of all our stakeholders. SSRP is committed to having a diverse and balanced Board comprised of women and men who equally champion all involvement in sport and physical activity.

All Board members will be selected on the basis of their abilities and merits and according to the requirements of the Board of Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership. Where appropriate and permissible, positive action will be taken to give under-represented groups equality of opportunity and representation on the Board of SSRP.

SSRP is committed to implementing the actions outlined in the Best Practice Framework to create and maintain a more diverse and gender equal Board.

4.2 Best Practice Framework:

4.2.1 Recruitment and selection:

The Strategy Committee is responsible for the nomination process to the LSP Board and is guided by our Constitution documents in ensuring diverse representation while being mindful the Board has the required skillset. The LSP will emphasis with nominating organisations the importance of considering both a female and male representative when making nominations to the Board and based on balance of representation received the LSP may decide to pursue specific representation depending on gaps.

4.2.2 Induction:

Induction of all new Board members is essential to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction should include awareness of the values, aims and processes of the organisation, Board effectiveness training as well as practical information. LSP is committed to ongoing CPD for all Board members e.g. training provided by Sport Ireland or arranged through other sources.

5.0 Equal Opportunities in Employment and Volunteering

5.1 General:

No employee or job applicant will be discriminated against, in recruitment, selection, placement, training, career development, promotion, compensation, benefits and special leave entitlements. All individuals will be selected, promoted, and treated on the basis of their abilities and merits only, and according to the requirements of the job. All employees will have equal opportunity to show ability and to progress within SSRP. Where appropriate and permissible, positive action will be taken to give under-represented groups equality of opportunity within SSRP.

5.2 Recruitment and selection:

The following measures will be adopted in the recruitment and selection procedure:

- Job requirements will be non-restrictive and flexible and distinguish between essential and desirable criteria and will be open to all suitably qualified applicants.
- Recruitment decisions will be made against specified criteria as required for the particular vacancy.
- The organisation will seek to ensure that the recruitment process is free from any direct or indirect discrimination on any of the nine grounds.
- Job requirements will not overemphasise formal qualifications and work experience.
- Where an applicant indicates that they have special needs, to facilitate their participation in the recruitment and selection process, reasonable accommodation will be provided, subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.
- An equal opportunities statement will appear on all job descriptions and advertisement.
- Advertisements will avoid discriminatory language and images.
- The assessment process will be objective and job relevant with procedures that minimise the potential for bias.
- Where possible, selection panels will be representative of society.
- Recruitment agencies where used will be informed of our equality policy and of the requirement to be non-discriminatory.
- If a medical test is found to be necessary, SSRP will explore the outcomes with the employee, secure further medical opinion as necessary, implement a safety assessment of the workplace if needed and make reasonable accommodations.

5.3 Induction:

SSRP's induction process to ensure a smooth transition to work will take account of this policy. We will in addition undertake awareness-raising with existing staff to assist this transition.

5.4 Development, promotion, compensation and benefits:

SSRP will aim to achieve equal opportunities for all in training, job development and promotion. We will also ensure that the principles and practice of equal pay and benefits are respected.

5.5 Work/life balance:

SSRP recognises the importance of having policies which are family friendly and which recognise the need of all individuals for a work/life balance. We are committed to encouraging and facilitating where possible flexible work practices such as part-time working which enable staff to juggle competing life demands. SSRP will ensure that individuals who avail of these arrangements are treated fairly and are not subject to discrimination.

5.6 Volunteers: There are many similarities, though much less formality between the recruitment process and day-to-day management of Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership's volunteers. Where possible and appropriate, our equality procedures for volunteers will mirror those of paid staff.

6.0 Equal Opportunities in Service Delivery

6.1 General: SSRP will aim to provide equal access for all to Sligo Sports Partnership's services. Where appropriate and permissible, positive action will be taken to give under-represented group's equality of opportunity to access our services.

6.2 Training courses:

- Training will be provided on the basis of individual needs and the requirements of the post held by the Employee.
- Selection for training will not be based on any of the nine grounds.
- Where an individual's disability impedes their ability to fully participate and engage in training activities, reasonable accommodation will be provided subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.
- Although every effort will be made to arrange training to facilitate attendance by part-time Employees, there is an expectation that part-time Employees will make themselves available, from time to time, to attend training outside their normal hours of work.

7.0 Accommodations for People with Disabilities

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership recognises that people with disabilities may have specific needs to facilitate their participation in terms of employment, volunteering or use of services. Such needs may include a sign language interpreter for an interview, re-allocation of marginal tasks or specific equipment in employment, training materials in alternative formats such as large print, or specific dietary requirements. SSRP will endeavour to meet these needs within budgetary constraints pursuing all available grants or statutory or voluntary support schemes where financial outlay or other support is required.

8.0 Conditions of Employment

- Terms and conditions of employment will be applied fairly to all Employees, with no reference to any of the grounds in the Employment Equality Acts.
- The Organisation seeks to provide equal pay for like work.
- The Organisation endeavours to provide a work environment free from bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.

9.0 Promotion and Re-Grading

- There will be equality of opportunity at all stages for promotion.
- Selection for promotion will be based on defined criteria related to the requirements of the post, and no reference will be made to the nine grounds in the selection process.

10.0 Classification of Posts

Classification of Posts Gender neutral job titles will be used and no reference will be made to any of the other eight grounds in classifying positions.

11.0 Reasonable Accommodation

- Reasonable accommodation shall be provided in order to facilitate a person with a disability to apply for positions with the Organisation, to attend for interview, to engage in employment and to participate in training activities as applicable.
- This commitment is subject to such reasonable accommodation not presenting a disproportionate burden on the Organisation, unless otherwise deemed appropriate.

12.0 Harassment and Sexual Harassment

SSRP will treat any allegations of harassment, sexual or otherwise, with the utmost seriousness and pursue the relevant procedures without delay.

13.0 Complaints

Individuals who feel they have not been treated in accordance with the policy can pursue the matter through the relevant procedures. Anyone who chooses to take such action will not be treated adversely as a result.

14.0 Compliance

All staff and volunteers have a duty to comply with the provisions of this policy; those who do not may be subject to action under the disciplinary policy for paid staff and other relevant Procedures for everyone else.

15.0 Review

The Board should consider the policy as appropriate and approve at a meeting of the Board.

Any proposed revisions to the policy should be approved at a meeting of the Board.

This policy is required to be approved by the Board and reviewed by the Board (every 3 years).