

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. RDA Equality and Diversity Statement

RDA UK is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff, volunteers and participants. We aim to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for everyone. We want to challenge all forms of discrimination and will ensure that we do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their protected characteristics, i.e. religion or belief, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or on any other basis. We aim to design and deliver our activities and services in a way which will encourage support participation from everyone.

Furthermore, RDA UK recognises the value that diversity can bring to our organisation and strives to reflect this among our trustees, employees, volunteers and participants. We believe that greater diversity provides diversity of perspective, leading to a broader range of opinions being involved in decision making and this creates a better and more open environment for achieving our objectives.

2. Policy Statement

RDA UK endorses the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in riding, carriage driving and horse care whether as participants, volunteers, coaches, or those within the RDA UK:

- has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their religion or belief, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or on any other basis. (Referred to as 'Protected Characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010); 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 sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

3. Legal Obligations

RDA UK is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind in RDA, and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to harassment. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Appendix.

4. Positive Action

The principle of Equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It entails 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.

RDA UK will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to RDA and participation in associated activities by people from any group that is under-represented in the sport or has difficulty accessing it.

5. Implementation

The following steps will be taken to publicise this policy and promote equality in RDA UK:

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- A copy of this document will be published on the RDA UK website and the “MyRDA” website.
- The RDA UK Chair will take overall responsibility for ensuring that the Policy is observed.
- The Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the RDA UK.
- RDA UK will collaborate fully with any surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in RDA UK and will take account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance equality in RDA UK.
- RDA UK will provide access to training for all of its Board Members to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities. All RDA UK volunteers will receive training in equality and diversity.
- It will be a condition of membership of RDA UK that all Member Groups:
 - formally adopt this policy, or produce their own equality and diversity policy in terms that are consistent with it; and
 - take steps to ensure that their Trustees, members, volunteers and participants behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Group’s constitution; and
 - ensure that access to membership is open and inclusive
 - support such measures and initiatives that RDA UK may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

6. Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy.

The Board will review all RDA UK activities and initiatives against the aims of the Policy on an annual basis, and the Chair will report formally on this issue in the annual report.

The Board, or where appropriate a designated project leader, will review any measures or initiatives that RDA UK may institute or take part in to promote and enhance equality and will report findings in the annual report.

The Board will review the Policy itself at intervals of no more than three years (or when necessary due to changes in legislation) and update as necessary.

7. Complaints and Compliance

RDA UK regards all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is concerned to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, member or volunteer who violates the RDA UK 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, should follow the process set out in RDA UK’s complaints process, which can be found on the MyRDA website, under “Policies.

Appendix: Relevant Legislation and Forms of Unacceptable Discrimination

Legal rights

Discrimination has been legally defined through a series of legislative acts, including the Race Relations Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act 2006.

In April 2010, the Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent. The Equality Act 2010 is a new law which harmonises where possible, and in some cases extends, 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 (employment only until 2012), disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status (employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on grounds of' a protected characteristic¹. This means that individuals will be protected if they have a characteristic, are assumed to have it, associate with someone who has it or 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: When a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified, this is unlawful. 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.

¹ The exception to this is pregnancy and maternity, which does not include protection by association or assumption – a woman is only protected from discrimination on grounds of her own pregnancy.