



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Members, players, parents and carers, coaches, volunteers, contractors and visitors

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Review cycle	Every two years, and whenever legislation, RFU regulations or club circumstances change
Policy owner	Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Applies to	All members, players, parents and carers, coaches, volunteers, contractors, spectators and visitors

Approval and signature

	Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Name	Paz Bombo
Signature	P.Bombo
Date	August 10 th 2026

1. Statement of commitment

Our purpose is to play rugby together, whoever you are.

Hackney RFC exists to make rugby available to people the sport has historically excluded. We recognise that certain groups in society experience discrimination and are denied equality of opportunity, and that rugby in this country has not been equally open to everyone.

We make a positive commitment to opposing all forms of discrimination, and we will work actively to promote equality of opportunity, to remove barriers to participation, and to build a club whose membership reflects the community it serves.

This is not an aspiration held separately from the rest of what we do. It is the reason the club exists, and it is measured in our Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

2. Scope

This policy applies to everyone connected with the club, including members, players, parents and carers, coaches, volunteers, trustees, committee members, contractors, spectators and visitors. It applies at all club activities, on and off the pitch, at Spring Hill and away, and online.



It covers participation, selection, coaching, volunteering, recruitment to any role, access to facilities, communications and the conduct of everyone at the club.

3. Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of nine protected characteristics:

1. age
2. disability
3. gender reassignment
4. marriage and civil partnership
5. pregnancy and maternity
6. race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin
7. religion or belief
8. sex
9. sexual orientation

Hackney RFC extends the same commitment to people who face disadvantage for reasons the Act does not cover, including:

- socio-economic background, including families on low incomes
- caring responsibilities
- an unrelated criminal record
- trade union membership or activity
- non-binary identity, and any other gender identity
- immigration or asylum status
- English as an additional language

4. What discrimination looks like

The Equality Act 2010 recognises several forms of unlawful conduct. Examples are given to show how each can arise at a rugby club.

Type	What it means	Example
Direct discrimination	Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic	Not selecting a player because of their race
Perceptive discrimination	Treating someone less favourably because you believe they have a protected characteristic, whether or not they do	Excluding a player because you assume they are gay
Associative discrimination	Treating someone less favourably because of the characteristic of someone they are connected to	Refusing a volunteer role to a parent because their child is disabled
Indirect discrimination	A rule or practice that applies to everyone but puts people with a characteristic at a disadvantage	Holding all social events in a bar, which excludes members whose faith prohibits alcohol



Type	What it means	Example
Discrimination arising from disability	Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected to their disability	Excluding a child from a session because of behaviour caused by their autism
Failure to make reasonable adjustments	Not taking reasonable steps to remove a disadvantage a disabled person faces	Not adapting a drill so a disabled player can take part
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment	Racist or homophobic remarks on the touchline, whether or not aimed at a particular person
Victimisation	Treating someone badly because they have complained, or supported someone else's complaint	Dropping a player who reported a coach's behaviour

Harassment does not have to be repeated, and it does not have to be intentional. It is judged by its effect as well as its purpose. It is not excused by being described as banter.

The club is also responsible for taking reasonable steps to prevent harassment of its members by third parties, including opposition players, coaches and spectators.

5. Reasonable adjustments

Where a disabled person is placed at a substantial disadvantage, the club will take reasonable steps to remove it. This is a legal duty, and unlike other parts of the Act it requires the club to act, not merely to avoid acting badly.

In practice this may include:

- adapting drills, formats or session length
- providing additional supervision or a familiar adult
- adjusting communication — written instructions, visual demonstrations, or extra time
- agreeing a personal care plan with the family and the Club Safeguarding Officer
- reviewing access to facilities, parking and changing provision

Anyone who needs an adjustment should speak to their coach, the Diversity and Inclusion Officer or the Club Safeguarding Officer. The club will discuss it with the individual, and with their parents or carers where the person is a child and will keep the arrangement under review.

The club runs a weekly session designed for autistic children through its Community Team Programme.



6. Removing barriers to participation

The club has identified the following barriers to participation and acts on them. They are set out in the Diversity and Inclusion Plan and reviewed with it.

Barrier	What the club does
Cost	Membership is subsidised. Support with fees is offered at first contact rather than on request, so that cost is removed before it becomes a reason not to start
Travel	Spring Hill is at the opposite end of the borough from some partner schools. The club seeks funding for transport to training and fixtures
Role models	The club works to increase the diversity of its coaches and volunteers, so that new members see people who look and sound like them
Food	The club works towards offering food that is familiar and culturally appropriate to a diverse membership
Religious observance	Junior training on Sunday mornings can clash with religious attendance. The club acknowledges that no single training time meets the needs of every group, and will consider alternatives where it can
Facilities	Changing and toilet provision is a barrier, particularly for girls and women. Improving it is a stated club priority
Language	Players and parents for whom English is an additional language are given additional time and support

7. Gender identity and trans inclusion

Hackney RFC welcomes trans and non-binary people. In 2025 members of the club established the Kelpies, a trans- and non-binary-inclusive side, to provide a route into team sport for people excluded by gendered club structures.

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic. Discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the basis of gender identity is a breach of this policy and will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct.

Participation in contact rugby is governed by RFU regulations, which the club follows. Those regulations are set nationally and may change. Where a regulation limits participation in a particular format, the club will work with the individual to find a way for them to take part in the club and will treat the conversation as private.

Members should not be asked to disclose their gender history. Anyone who does disclose it can expect that information to be treated in confidence under the club's data protection arrangements.

8. Responsibilities

Who	Responsibility
Everyone at the club	Follow this policy. Do not discriminate, harass or victimise. Challenge and report behaviour that falls below it
Coaches, volunteers and officials	Model the behaviour expected. Make reasonable adjustments. Report concerns
Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Day-to-day oversight of this policy. First point of contact for concerns about discrimination



Who	Responsibility
Club Safeguarding Officer	Where a concern involves a child or adult at risk, this is a safeguarding matter and is handled under the Safeguarding Policy
Discipline Secretary	Handles breaches of this policy by adults under the club's disciplinary process
Executive Committee	Ensures this policy forms part of the induction of every new trustee, coach and volunteer
Board of Trustees	Approves this policy, reviews it, and is accountable for the club's compliance with the Equality Act 2010

9. Raising a concern

Any concern or complaint will be taken seriously and investigated. No one who raises a concern in good faith will be treated badly for doing so.

Concern	Report to
Discrimination, harassment or victimisation involving an adult	Diversity and Inclusion Officer. If the concern is about the Diversity and Inclusion Officer, report to the President
Any concern involving a child or adult at risk	Club Safeguarding Officer — safeguarding@hackneyrfc.co.uk , 07399 511193
Discriminatory abuse at a fixture	Discipline Secretary — discipline@hackneyrfc.co.uk . Racist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic abuse are serious aggravating factors and are referred to the RFU head of discipline
A concern about the Board, or where internal routes have not worked	RFU Speak Up — speakup@rfu.com

External advice is available from Citizens Advice, Acas and the Equality Advisory and Support Service.

10. Monitoring and review

The club measures the diversity of its membership against the diversity of its community, and monitors progress towards alignment. Measurement is by membership survey before the start of each season, supported by the club's equality, diversity and inclusion survey.

The club also monitors its engagement with and recruitment from schools in areas of high deprivation.

Data is collected and held in line with the club's data protection arrangements. Providing it is voluntary, and it is reported only in aggregate.

This policy is reviewed at least every two years, and whenever legislation, RFU regulations or club circumstances change. The Board records each review, whether or not the policy changes.



11. Legislation and related documents

Legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equal Pay Act 1970 were consolidated into the Equality Act 2010 and no longer apply as separate legislation.

Club documents

- Hackney RFC Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Hackney RFC Code of Conduct
- Hackney RFC Safeguarding Policy

RFU and Constituent Body

- RFU Regulation 15 (age grade rugby), 19 (discipline), 21 (safeguarding)
- RFU Speak Up Policy
- Middlesex CB RFU, Pitch-side behaviour in age-grade rugby