

Equality Policy

Last approved by Board:

5th Sept 2023

This policy outlines Paddle Scotland's commitment to equality and the actions and legal obligations Paddle Scotland will implement to enable involvement for all in the operation of Paddle Scotland and our activities and events.

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Paddle Scotland Equality Policy

Paddle Scotland is committed to creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all members, staff, volunteers, members and participants. This commitment is to all, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("Protected Characteristics"). In addition the commitment extends to ensure everyone has the same opportunities regardless of their socio-economic background.

By adopting this Equality Policy, Paddle Scotland is committed to creating a culture that promotes inclusivity, diversity, and respect. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of paddlesport and feel a sense of belonging. Paddle Scotland will do everything we can to make our organisation and the paddling community accessible and welcoming to all.

To deliver on this commitment we will:

- 1. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion:** We will promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout our organisation actively supporting or contributing to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to paddlesport by people from any group that is under-represented in the sport and/or has difficulty accessing it.
- 2. Embrace diversity across our networks:** We are committed to embracing diversity. We believe that diversity brings a range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas that enrich paddlesport environments making them more inclusive and accessible to more people. We encourage providers of paddlesport activity to achieve diversity in their provision, we do the same within our activities. We actively encourage individuals from all backgrounds and identities to apply for positions of influence, in our committees, and in our employed staff team.
- 3. Celebrate and support positive role models:** We actively support the growth and development of positive role models across different communities and under-represented groups. We utilise our channels to inspire people from different communities to become paddlers, coaches, leaders, volunteers and providers of paddlesport.
- 4. Deliver training and awareness:** We provide training and sessions for our members, staff, volunteers and participants to promote understanding and awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion. This will guide the way we think, act and behave to support the continuation of our welcoming and inclusive culture.

5. **Deliver accessible products, services and support:** We prioritise accessibility in the design, development and delivery of products and services, incorporating features to remove barriers based on disabilities or health conditions, or socio-economic background.
6. **Promote an inclusive culture:** We positively promote a culture across the sport (and across the organisation) where people feel valued, respected, welcomed, included and feel a sense of belonging. We listen to the needs of our community and look for ways to be an ally for any under-represented groups.
7. **Monitoring and review:** We regularly monitor and review our Equality Policy to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. We take action to address any areas of concern and continually strive to improve our approach to equality and diversity. The Paddle Scotland Policy Review Procedures require all Paddle Scotland policies undergo a formal review and Equality Impact Assessment every three years, in addition, review occurs as part of our continuous improvement activity in response to learning and feedback that occurs during our activities.
8. **Elimination of discrimination:** We take a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment or bullying. We ensure that we meet our legal obligations to protect individuals from discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic. We have a clear [complaints procedure](#) and [discrimination reporting procedures](#) in place to deal with any instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Any complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and fairly.
9. **Legal obligation:** We are committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind in paddlesport and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. In the event that an individual or organisation associated with Paddle Scotland is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal we will cooperate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action in relation to the matter concerned.
10. **Committed to the Equality Standard for Sport:** We are committed to maintaining the Advanced Standard that was achieved in 2022.

Responsibility

11. **Responsibility:** The chair of the Paddle Scotland Board takes overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy is observed and implemented. The Paddle Scotland Board and all staff members take full account of the policy in arriving at decisions in relation to activities of Paddle Scotland.
12. **Member responsibility:** It is a condition of Paddle Scotland membership that individual members commit to act in accordance with this policy and support such measures and initiatives that Paddle Scotland may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.
13. **Club responsibility:** It is a condition of affiliation that Paddle Scotland Affiliated Clubs:
 - formally adopt this policy, or produce their own equality and diversity policy in terms that are consistent with it;
 - take steps to ensure that their committees, members and volunteers behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Club's constitution;
 - ensure that access to membership is open and inclusive;
 - support such measures and initiatives that Paddle Scotland may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.
14. **Accountability:** Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any member, volunteer or employee who violates this Equality Policy.

Trans Inclusion

Paddle Scotland remains committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across all areas of our sport, ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

We recognise that the legal and regulatory landscape relating to gender identity and participation is evolving, particularly in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and recent legal developments.

Paddle Scotland is currently undertaking a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders and experts, with a view to reviewing and updating our approach in line

with emerging guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and wider sector developments.

During this period, we will continue to take a considered, proportionate and case-by-case approach, ensuring that our decisions are informed by our commitment to inclusion, safety and fairness.

Further updates will be provided following the completion of this consultation and review process.