

Board of Directors EDI Statement:

A true commitment to EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) is more of action rather than words. Including the support and progressing of those actions by dedicated and committed personnel who are passionate about achieving successful outcomes for everybody involved.

At Gillingham Football Club we take pride in welcoming everyone to Priestfield Stadium and will do our utmost to ensure that everyone has the best experience that they can possibly have.

Everyone, regardless of their background or beliefs, should feel truly welcome to be part of or be associated with our wonderful football club.

Our senior leadership team regularly meets and reviews on the club's history and future considerations for putting people first so that we can commit to be at the forefront for greater equality within our sport, holding ourselves accountable for our progress at all times.

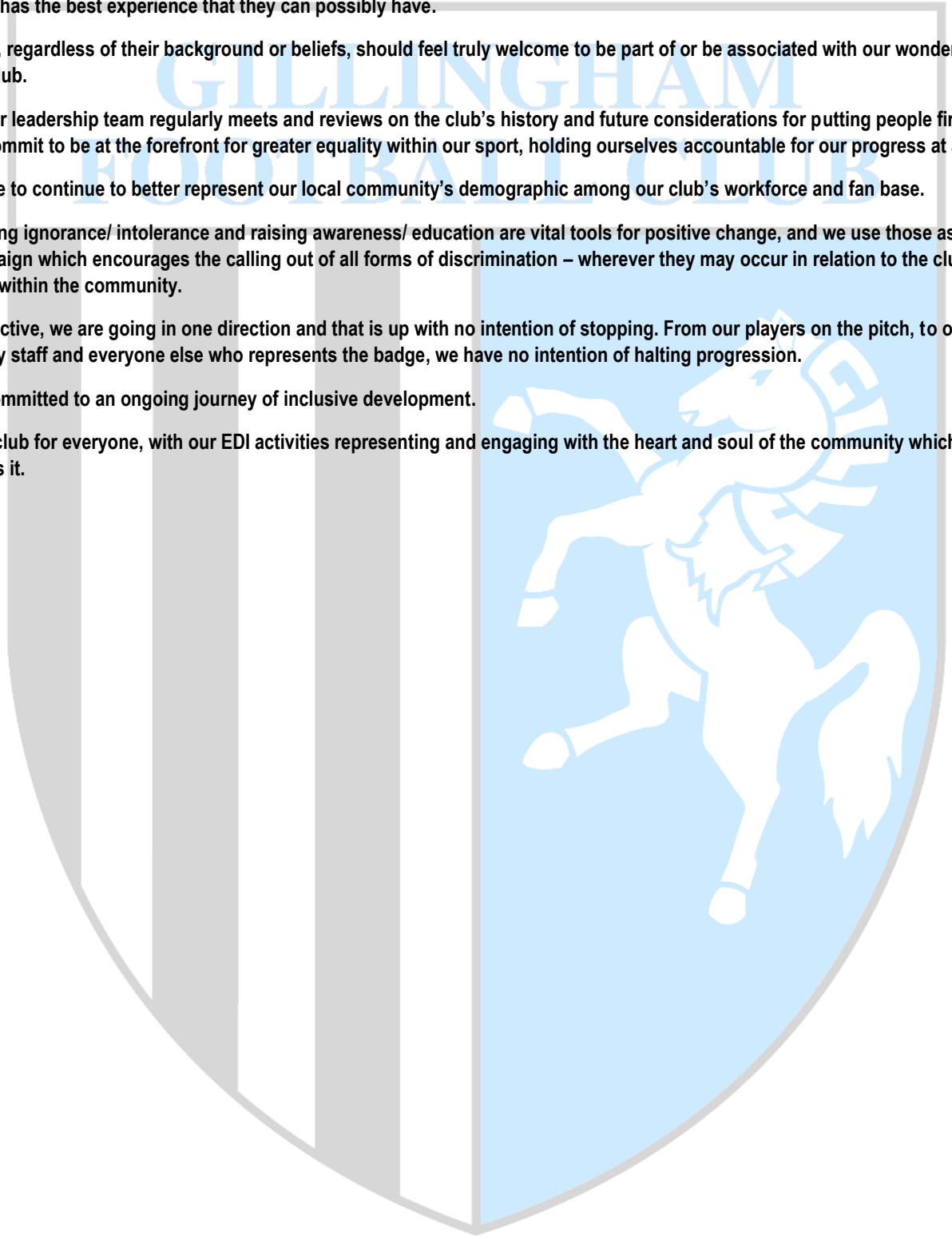
We pledge to continue to better represent our local community's demographic among our club's workforce and fan base.

Challenging ignorance/ intolerance and raising awareness/ education are vital tools for positive change, and we use those as part of our campaign which encourages the calling out of all forms of discrimination – wherever they may occur in relation to the club's activities within the community.

As a collective, we are going in one direction and that is up with no intention of stopping. From our players on the pitch, to our hospitality staff and everyone else who represents the badge, we have no intention of halting progression.

We are committed to an ongoing journey of inclusive development.

This is a club for everyone, with our EDI activities representing and engaging with the heart and soul of the community which surrounds it.



INTRODUCTION

This strategy document sets out our continuing commitment to grow and develop our processes, policies and priorities relating to all of the areas of EDI.

Our Equality Action plan will accompany this document to provide focus and allow us to measure our progress. This document and the action plan will also underpin our long-term strategy and will be reviewed and updated for each season.

At every level of the club, school and community, we remain committed to aiming for the best possible outcome we can get from the EFL Code of Conduct.

KEY STRATEGIES

The club's key strategies (listed below) demonstrate that equality, diversity and inclusion are business-wide priorities and supported by the board.

- Build a common understanding of the purpose, vision and direction of Gillingham FC.
- Develop a high-performance culture where people are respected, rewarded and empowered to reach their full potential regardless of the 9 Protected Characteristics. [Protected characteristics | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com)
- Develop a sustainable business model which reduces the dependency on media and match day income together as a whole team.
- Develop a team of disciplined, footballers who are role models for young people of all backgrounds while playing a brand of exciting football.
- Create a stadium with supporting infrastructure, being inclusive of our diverse visitors, fanbase and guests.
- Establish effective communication within the whole team, creating a united integrated team philosophy with equality for all.

EDI WORKFORCE

Our Internal Work Force Group will also include representatives from every area of the club and will meet regularly to review progress against our Equality Action Plan, which has detailed actions for each department.

WORKFORCE TARGETS

Our intention is to survey our fans and the local area to highlight on how the stadium can be more accessible and highlight if there are any groups where we can look to increase participation.

Our targets will be aspirational and include 3 and 5 year check points, calculated via a yearly percentage increase.

We are keen to have a workforce which represents the community in which we operate and engage in.

Actions in order to meet the percentage increases are detailed under the relevant section within our Equality Action plan.

We are aware that the plan will continue to grow and change over the years, in line with the growth of the town and as we continue to develop our workforce.

We have already look to implement a Safer Recruitment process to comply with safeguarding and are now looking at how we can include a blind recruitment process.

SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT

Our Supporter Liaison /Disability Liaison Officer, Ben Reeves has worked closely over the last 7 years with staff and supporters who is now looking to work closely with the EFL, Levelling The Playing Field and other clubs as to how we can progress in the one direction that we are going in.

In addition to our key strategies and workforce targets, our work will be driven by fan data, collated on an annual basis.

Which will allows us to spot trends and make evidence-based decisions. The supporters data collection window is November – January.

Through a board meeting we are going to start with focusing on the following areas:

- Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage
- Disability
- LGBT
- Female engagement

Our External Equality Advisory group will play a key role, especially with our focus on people from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds. We are also going to look to build relationships with community groups within the Gillingham to advise, guide and support us so that we can gather a better understanding of different cultures.

This will enable us to maintain the strong, day to day relationships we're looking to forge with them, so they feel comfortable in being able to give advice and correcting us when needed.

The links we intend to build place the club at the very centre of our local community.

Since making our commitment to meeting the accessible stadia guidelines in 2015, our provision for supporters, workers and visitors with disabilities has dramatically improved and we welcomed a record number of supporters with disabilities during our 22-23 season.

We will continue to identify further opportunities to enhance our provision and work closely with the local communities to ensure that we improve on all aspects of EDI.

Her Game Too is our latest edition we have endorsed created by a female fan who approach the club during the 22-23 season. Throughout that season, representatives of 'Her Game Too' met with the board, COO and there was a fixture dedicated to 'Her Game Too'.

Levelling the Playing Field is a charity we have worked closely with other the years and one match per season is allocated to this wonderful charity.

Kick It Out and The PFA also work closely with the first team squad and the Academy where they will deliver annual life skills sessions for all involved.

In the 2022-2023 due to reports of Racist and Inappropriate Sexual chanting/comments, the club looked to act swiftly in identifying these individuals where there were prosecutions. The club also developed a 'reporting line' where visitors of the stadium can report to security.

Through the help of our supporters, we strongly believe these outcomes are a positive reflection of the processes we have put in place. We continue to encourage incidents to be reported to us on matchdays and on our social media accounts. All incidents are recorded on MyConcern to track progress and review areas of concern which may need more focus as part of our Action Plan.

Club Staff will continue to be strongly encouraged to use the reporting tool/MyConcern to record incidents of discrimination in the workplace. First team players have met full-time and matchday staff in person, and participated in zooms calls, to discuss their own experiences first-hand and give staff extra confidence to report incidents. As above, all reports received from staff are recorded.

The Club is committed to continually providing a summary each season.

We will also continue to support No Room For Racism campaign, as well as the work of Kick It Out and Show Racism The Red Card. We will also continue to find ways to help our players, staff and people associated with the club in vocalising and representing their views and beliefs.

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Everyone, regardless of their background or beliefs, should feel truly welcome to be part of or be associated with our wonderful football club.

It covers discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and religion and/or belief, sex or sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Gillingham FC recognises that there can be differences between the physical sex and gender assigned at birth and an individual's gender identity/expression, therefore, this policy also covers discrimination on the basis of a person's gender identity.

Our aim is to make full use of people's talents and skills by creating an open and inclusive workplace culture where people from all backgrounds can work together with dignity and respect.

We will take active steps to fulfil our responsibilities and promote good practice by:

- Complying with legal obligations in a transparent manner.
- Publishing this policy widely amongst staff and on our website.
- Assessing the impact of policies, content and working practice to identify, remove or mitigate any disadvantage to underrepresented groups or recognise any cultural or religious sensitivities or differences.
- Taking action to redress any gender, racial or other imbalance highlighted from monitoring data.
- Promoting awareness and understanding of EDI matters among staff and other parties through policies, training, guidance and campaigns.
- Engaging with staff in respect of changes which may affect their employment.
- Ensuring that staff and applicants are treated fairly and judged solely on merit and by reference to their skills and abilities.
- Raising awareness of our policies and commitment to EDI with external suppliers and partners and encouraging them to follow similar good practice.
- Ensuring that the Club facilities are, as far as reasonably possible, welcoming and accessible to all.
- Making sure reasonable adjustments are made, as appropriate, to enable staff with disabilities or additional needs to overcome barriers to working.
- Ensure compliance with employment and equal opportunity legislation and regulation.
- Ensuring staff and other parties are provided with appropriate tools so that they feel confident to discuss EDI issues and raise any concerns.
- Dealing with potential and actual acts of discrimination, harassment and bullying appropriately under relevant the Club policy and taking action where necessary.

Contact Details

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