

ESSU Equality Policy

AUGUST 2026

Document Owner: ESSU Chair/Vice-Chair

Document approved by: ESSU Committee

Date Policy approved: 1 August 2026

Next review Date: 1 August 2029

Policy Statement

ESSU is committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming and respectful environment where everyone is treated fairly and has equal opportunity to participate, contribute and succeed. We believe that diversity strengthens our sport and organisation. We are committed to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering a culture where all individuals are valued and respected.

ESSU will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation in any form.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in ESSU activities, including:

- Athletes and participants
- Coaches and officials
- Volunteers
- Directors and committee members
- Staff and contractors
- Consultants and advisers
- Parents, carers and supporters
- Partner organisations

Purpose of the Policy

ESSU recognises that some individuals and groups may have historically experienced barriers to participation, development and progression within sport.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion across all ESSU activities.
- Ensure everyone has fair access to opportunities.
- Prevent discrimination and unfair treatment.
- Create an environment where all individuals feel respected and valued.
- Encourage participation from people of all backgrounds.
- Support compliance with equality legislation and best practice.

ESSU aims to ensure that no individual is unfairly disadvantaged when participating in, accessing, delivering or managing any ESSU sporting activities.

ESSU is committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in our sport and activities in an environment that is fair, inclusive, respectful and free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.

Our Commitment

ESSU is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity regardless of:

Protected Characteristics

As defined by the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Wider Inclusion

ESSU also recognises and values diversity beyond legal protections and seeks to provide equal opportunities regardless of:

- Socio-economic background
- Educational background
- Caring responsibilities
- Geographic location
- Cultural background
- Employment status
- Any other personal characteristic that does not impact a person's ability to participate safely and fairly

Legal Responsibilities

ESSU recognises its responsibilities under:

The Equality Act 2010

and any subsequent legislation relating to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights.

ESSU will regularly review this policy to ensure it remains aligned with:

- Current legislation
- National guidance
- Sport sector best practice
- Governance requirements

In some circumstances, specific sporting regulations may permit lawful exemptions relating to competitive eligibility or participation criteria where allowed by legislation.

Types of Unacceptable Behaviour

ESSU considers the following behaviours unacceptable.

Discrimination

Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Examples:

- Refusing participation because of disability.
- Selecting individuals differently because of race or sex.
- Excluding someone due to religious beliefs.

Indirect Discrimination

Applying rules, practices or requirements that appear neutral but unfairly disadvantage certain groups. Such arrangements may only be lawful where they are a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate objective.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that:

- Violates a person's dignity.
- Creates an intimidating environment.

- Creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere.

Harassment can be verbal, physical, written or online and may involve:

- Offensive comments
- Derogatory jokes
- Unwanted physical contact
- Offensive messages or posts
- Intimidating behaviour

Harassment may occur as a single serious incident or through repeated behaviour.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, including:

- Sexual comments
- Sexual jokes
- Inappropriate messages
- Unwanted advances
- Unwanted touching
- Sharing sexual content

Such behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted behaviour that is:

- Offensive
- Intimidating
- Malicious
- Insulting
- Abusive

Bullying can:

- Undermine confidence
- Cause emotional distress
- Cause physical harm

- Isolate or exclude individuals

Bullying may occur in person or online.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated unfairly because they have:

- Made a complaint.
- Supported another person's complaint.
- Given evidence in an investigation.
- Raised concerns under this policy.

ESSU will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a genuine concern.

Reasonable Adjustments

ESSU recognises its responsibility to make reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals wherever practicable. We will work with individuals to identify and implement reasonable adjustments that help remove barriers to participation.

Examples may include:

- Accessible venues
- Alternative communications formats
- Additional support arrangements
- Flexible procedures where appropriate
- Modified equipment or facilities

Each request will be considered individually and fairly.

Inclusion of Transgender Participants

ESSU is committed to treating all participants with dignity and respect. Where participation is governed by national or international competition rules, athletes must comply with the eligibility requirements established by the relevant governing body or competition organiser.

For activities organised directly by ESSU, participation will be managed in line with current ESSU inclusion guidance and any applicable legislation.

ESSU will seek to balance:

- Inclusion
- Fair competition
- Safety
- Sporting integrity

when developing participation policies and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

ESSU Committee

The Committee is responsible for:

- Approving this policy.
 - Ensuring implementation across the organisation.
 - Monitoring compliance.
 - Reviewing equality-related matters and risks.
 - Supporting a culture of inclusion.
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ESSU Chair

The Chair is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of the policy.
 - Ensuring adequate resources are available.
 - Promoting good practice across the organisation.
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Equality Lead

ESSU may appoint an Equality Lead who will:

- Support implementation of this policy.
 - Provide guidance and advice.
 - Monitor equality-related issues.
 - Coordinate training and awareness initiatives where appropriate.
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All Stakeholders

Everyone involved in ESSU activities has a responsibility to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Promote inclusion.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Comply with this policy.
- Report concerns where appropriate.

Equality is everyone's responsibility.

Recruitment, Appointments and Selection

ESSU is committed to fair recruitment, appointment and selection practices. No individual will be disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic or unrelated personal circumstance.

ESSU will:

- Assess applicants fairly.
- Use objective selection criteria.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Promote equality in recruitment and appointment processes.

Equality Statement

ESSU is an equal opportunities organisation and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified individuals regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Volunteers, Contractors and Partners

All volunteers, contractors, consultants and partners working with ESSU are expected to:

- Support equality and inclusion.
- Act in accordance with this policy.
- Promote respectful behaviour.
- Avoid discriminatory practices.

Equality expectations may be referenced within relevant agreements, contracts and codes of conduct.

Communication and Awareness

ESSU will promote this policy through:

- Staff and volunteer induction
- Training programmes
- Codes of conduct
- Governance documentation
- Public information

- The ESSU website

We will seek opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation.

Reporting Concerns

Any individual who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may raise their concern through the:

- ESSU Complaints Policy
- ESSU Bullying and Harassment Policy
- ESSU Safeguarding Procedures (where applicable)

All concerns will be treated seriously and investigated appropriately.

Protection Against Retaliation

No individual will suffer disadvantage because they:

- Raise a genuine concern.
- Make a complaint in good faith.
- Participate in an investigation.
- Support another person's complaint.

Deliberately false or malicious complaints may be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

ESSU is committed to continually improving equality, diversity and inclusion across all areas of the organisation.

We will:

- Monitor equality-related issues and complaints.
- Review policies and procedures.
- Gather feedback where appropriate.
- Identify areas for improvement.
- Promote good practice and learning.

Findings may be reported to the committee to support informed decision-making and organisational development.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- ESSU Code of Conduct
 - ESSU Complaints Policy
 - ESSU Bullying and Harassment Policy
 - ESSU Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
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Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years, and:

- Following significant legislative changes.
- Following major organisational or governance developments.
- Following relevant incidents or complaints.