

What is Equality?

Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given a fair chance. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that their needs are met in different ways. Equality focuses on those areas covered by the law, namely the key areas of race, gender, disability and more recently, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation.

Topic Areas within Equality

Race

Approximately 1% of the population of Northumberland are black, Asian or from other ethnic minorities. National research has shown that people from ethnic minorities have lower levels of participation in sport and physical exercise compared with the white population. Such research has also shown that levels of participation are not equal for all ethnic groups indicating that barriers to participation vary between groups.

Gender

Research has found that women and girls do not participate in sport on an equal basis with men. The issues that prevent women taking part in sport and physical activity are based on institutionalised views of women's role within society generally and the family in particular. Women may also be discriminated against as a result of caring responsibilities, marital status or general prejudice.

Disability

In Northumberland, there are 60,470 (20% of our population) people with limiting long-term illness and this number is growing as our population gets older and the occurrence of ill-health increases. It is accepted that disabled people are under-represented in sport and can have less opportunities for active lifestyles.

Religion and Beliefs

People may experience discrimination in sport because of their religion or beliefs, organisations should respect the rights of its employees and individuals within the community, to practice their religion or beliefs.

Sexual Orientation

Lesbian women, gay men and bisexuals may also experience discrimination in trying to gain access to sporting opportunities and education and training within the workplace.

Age

Participation in sport decreases as people age. This can be due to a variety of factors including perceptions, ill-health and lack of appropriate opportunities. Age was recently covered by discrimination laws so organisations must take reasonable steps to ensure that their services can be accessed.

Useful Terminology

Discrimination occurs when someone, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex, pregnancy or marital status; age; disability; religion or sexual preference.

Harassment occurs when someone is made to feel intimidated, insulted or humiliated due to a personal characteristic that violates a person's dignity. Harassment is usually persistent and creates a 'hostile' - or intimidating – environment for that person.

Victimisation is defined when someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action or a stand against the organisation or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

Bullying is an abuse of power and is the process of intimidating or mistreating someone weaker in a more vulnerable position.

Prejudice is a pre-judgement made about someone or a group of people based around a personal characteristic or a perception of one. The prejudice is generally hidden and can be based on little actual fact.

Stereotyping is a mass assumption or generalisation based on little fact and usually about a group of people in society. It leads to sweeping statements applied to a number of people and can be reinforced by the media, parents and peers etc.