



## **Sutton United Football Club (Sutton Coldfield)**

Equality & Diversity Policy

Effective Period: 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026

### **1. Purpose**

Sutton United Football Club (Sutton Coldfield) is committed to creating an inclusive and respectful environment where every individual is valued. Our purpose is to eliminate discrimination, promote fair treatment and embed equality and diversity across all areas of the Club. We recognise that football has a unique ability to bring communities together and we embrace our responsibility to lead by example, ensuring opportunities are open to all regardless of background or identity.

### **2. Legal and Governance Context**

This Policy is aligned with the Equality Act 2010 and covers all nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. We are guided by:

- The FA's 'A Game Free From Discrimination' Strategy 2024–2028, which emphasises inclusion and representation.
- Government requirements under the Football Governance Bill, introducing expectations for DEI reporting and accountability.
- Legal rulings from 2025 that influence how inclusion, particularly around gender identity, must be implemented.

Sutton United FC will always comply with evolving legislation and governing body standards, ensuring our policy remains relevant and effective.

### **3. Scope**

This Policy applies to all individuals involved with Sutton United FC, including but not limited to:

- Players (youth, amateur, semi-professional, and representative squads)
- Coaches, match officials and team staff
- Employees, committee members, and volunteers
- Spectators, supporters, sponsors, and community partners

It applies to behaviour at the Club, online activity, and any event or programme delivered under the Sutton United FC name.

#### **4. Our Commitments**

We are committed to embedding equality and diversity across every aspect of our work. This includes:

a. Representation & Accountability:

- Strive for greater representation across leadership, staffing, players, and volunteers.
- Collect and review anonymised diversity data annually to inform decision-making.

b. Inclusive Culture:

- Promote a culture where all individuals feel respected and safe.
- Take a zero-tolerance stance on discrimination, harassment, victimization and bullying.

c. Education & Awareness:

- Deliver regular training for staff, volunteers and players.
- Work with external organisations such as Kick It Out and Football v Homophobia.

d. Fair Practices:

- Ensure recruitment and promotion are transparent and inclusive.
- Make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers faced by disabled individuals.

e. Transparency:

- Publish progress updates on our website and provide reports to governing bodies.
- Review and renew this Policy annually, taking account of national developments.

#### **5. Implementation Actions (1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026)**

We have identified key actions to ensure delivery of this Policy:

- Conduct an anonymous baseline survey of staff, players, and volunteers by August 2025.
- Deliver DEI awareness and anti-discrimination training sessions by September 2025.
- Introduce inclusive recruitment guidance by October 2025.
- Review policies on gender inclusion to reflect current legislation and FA rules by November 2025.
- Carry out a full Policy review in June 2026 for the next cycle.

#### **6. Monitoring & Review**

The Club's DEI Officer, supported by the Committee, will be responsible for day-to-day monitoring of this Policy. Quarterly reviews will be undertaken to track progress against objectives. Where issues are identified, corrective actions will be agreed and implemented swiftly. A summary of progress will be included in the Club's Annual Report.

## **7. Communications**

This Policy will be clearly communicated to all stakeholders:

- Published on the Club's website and social media channels.
- Displayed on noticeboards within the clubhouse and training facilities.
- Incorporated into staff, player, and volunteer induction programmes.
- Reinforced through ongoing workshops, newsletters, and match-day announcements.

## **8. Governance and Oversight**

The Committee holds ultimate accountability for this Policy, with the DEI Working Group responsible for practical implementation. The Working Group will:

- Review feedback and complaints.
- Propose new initiatives and training.
- Ensure alignment with FA, league, and community standards.
- Provide quarterly updates to the Committee.

## **9. Grievance and Complaints Process**

Any individual who feels they have been subject to discrimination, harassment, or bullying is encouraged to raise their concern through the Club's complaints procedure. All complaints will:

- Be taken seriously and dealt with confidentially.
- Be investigated impartially, with both parties given an opportunity to respond.
- Lead to proportionate sanctions if breaches are identified, ranging from warnings to suspension or exclusion.
- Where criminal conduct may have occurred, matters will be referred to the police and appropriate authorities.

## **10. Conclusion**

Sutton United FC (Sutton Coldfield) is committed to ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do. By embedding these principles into our culture, we strengthen our Club, enrich our community and contribute to making football a sport that is welcoming and open to all.