

Northern Circuit Equality & Diversity Policy

The Northern Circuit is firmly committed to encouraging equality, diversity, inclusion and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We promote an environment where diversity is appreciated. The aim is for our organisation to be truly representative of all sections of society and for everyone involved in circuit activities to feel respected.

Policy Purpose

1. The policy's purpose is to:
 - Provide equality, fairness and respect for all members, volunteers and those in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time;
 - State our stance against any unlawful discrimination due to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This includes but is not limited to discrimination in relation to pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
2. Circuit recognises that our commitment to equal opportunities necessitates the identification of possible areas of discrimination and positive steps to eliminate any areas of possible disadvantage identified.

Commitments

Equality & Diversity Action Plan

3. The Northern Circuit commits to the adoption of an Equality and Diversity Action Plan, which shall identify areas for action and ensure our commitment to taking practical steps to promote equality and diversity.

Environment

4. Circuit commits to creating a working and social environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff and members are recognised and valued.

5. This commitment includes training our employees and Executive Committee about their rights and responsibilities under this equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Those responsibilities include the Executive Committee, staff, volunteers and members conducting themselves to help the Northern Circuit provide equal opportunities in recruitment, delivery of membership benefits, activities and any dealings with the public, to prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
6. All staff should understand they, as well as the Northern Circuit, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination conducted in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, members, suppliers and the public.

Recruitment, Training & Development

7. The Northern Circuit is committed to ensuring fair access to opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff and members.
8. Decisions concerning staff recruitment and committee positions shall be based on merit.
9. The Northern Circuit shall undertake reviews of recruitment practices and procedures to ensure fairness, and also update policy to take account of changes in the law or regulatory obligations.
10. The Northern Circuit shall monitor the make-up of the workforce, committee members including their age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief to identify and tackle underrepresentation.
11. Monitoring will also include assessing how this Equality and Diversity policy, and the Equality and Diversity action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Complaints

12. The Northern Circuit takes complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by employees, members, suppliers and the public seriously.
13. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the Circuit's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Complaints against members may be grounds of suspension or expulsion from Circuit social activities.
14. Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
15. Individuals who wish to make a complaint under this policy can do so informally to the EDSM Officer by emailing EDSM@northerncircuit.co.uk.
16. No individual shall be subject to any form of reprisal for raising in good faith any allegation or complaint under this policy.