

How do I report discrimination or hate that I've experienced in a sports club?

Sport should be a safe and welcoming community for all.

We want to support anyone who may have experienced or witnessed discrimination, a hate crime, or a hate-related incident in sport. There are people in your sport who can help. Whether the behaviour was targeted towards you or you were a witness to something happening to another person, this behaviour shouldn't be tolerated.

**NO HATE
JUST SPORT**

What is discrimination and hate?

Discrimination means treating someone unfairly or prejudicially because of a protected characteristic. These include sex, age, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment (which includes people who are transgender), and pregnancy or maternity.

Discrimination can occur at many touchpoints in a club's life.

Examples include:

- **Membership and participation:** Refusing or delaying admission of a person because of race, religion, disability, gender, etc. Enforcing rules or fees differently for certain groups (e.g., charging higher fees to gay members). Requiring women to play on restricted days that men don't face.
- **Access to facilities or teams:** Denying someone access to a sports facility (e.g., pool, gym, pitch) or team placement based on a protected characteristic. Imposing dress codes or equipment rules that discriminate (e.g., banning head coverings for religious players without justification).

- **Competition and events:** Running competitions or training that indirectly exclude (such as offering only evening sessions, which affects young working adults or single parents). Scheduling events at inaccessible venues for disabled participants.
- **Social and online behaviour:** Verbal or physical harassment (slurs, jokes, threats) by players, coaches, or spectators during games or in club social spaces (changing rooms, clubhouses). Discriminatory abuse or comments on club forums or social media.
- **Policies and rules:** Club constitutions or by-laws that overtly privilege one group (e.g., "only men may be committee members") or inadvertently disadvantage others (e.g., requiring a degree or gym membership for all coaches, which might exclude disabled candidates).



What is hate crime?

A **hate crime** is any criminal act motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone because of their:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- transgender identity

A person affected does not have to be a member of the group that the hostility is targeted at. Anyone could experience a hate crime.

For example, you could be called a homophobic slur, even if you're heterosexual.

Discrimination and hate can and does happen in any part of sport, e.g., on the field/ court, in the stands, in changing rooms, in training sessions, online, etc.

It might make you feel isolated, upset, and as if you must deal with this on your own. But you are not alone, and there are people who can help.



Who should I tell if I experience discrimination or hate in my sport?

If you experience discrimination or hate in a sports club, you should report it to the club or National Governing Body. They are expected to take complaints seriously and address them appropriately.

While the Equality Act 2010 does not impose a direct legal duty to investigate every complaint, organisations can defend themselves against a discrimination claim if they can show they took all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination. This means that clubs and NGBs should have clear reporting processes, respond promptly, and take reasonable action to protect participants.

Speak to someone you trust. This can be your coach, a parent, or another volunteer. Everyone has a role to play in making sure you feel safe.

Have a look at your National Governing Bodies website to see what advice they have.

You might know who your club's Safeguarding/Welfare Officer is. This is another good person to speak to. They are here to help:

- They will support you with any next steps. They might need to tell your National Governing Body (NGB) or local County/Regional Association. These are organisations that keep everyone in your sport safe from harm. They can try to make sure you don't experience something like this again.
- Your club's Welfare/Safeguarding Officer may also signpost you to some other organisations that can give you emotional and well-being support.
- You may want to talk to one of these organisations before you report the incident. You can find a link to agencies that can support you here.
- If what happened involves your club's Welfare/Safeguarding Officer, or you don't trust the people in your club, you can make a report directly to your NGB. Find them here.
- If your club doesn't have a Welfare/Safeguarding Officer, your coach or chairperson will also be a good person to speak with.

What will happen after I tell someone what has happened to me?

A few things might happen after you tell someone what has happened:

- Your Club Welfare Officer will investigate what's happened and might be able to solve the problem with you. They might need to seek advice from their NGB to make sure they take the right action. If you're not happy with what has been done, you're welcome to speak to your NGB directly.
- If you've made a report to your NGB, there will be a process they follow in this situation. They will send this to the most appropriate staff member, who will be in contact with you to arrange a conversation. They might convene a panel of independent people to consider the facts, and you may have the option of attending to share your perspective.
- What can be done will depend on the evidence provided/gathered - but even if there isn't enough evidence for action to be taken, there are other things that can happen. You can get emotional support; the incident can be logged; the club may be able to put out messages to make it clear that they take hate and discrimination seriously and will be doing everything possible to stop it.

Sports clubs should be a safe and inclusive space for everyone. If you've experienced discrimination and hate, it's never okay and appropriate action will be taken.



NO HATE JUST SPORT

Hate hurts. Silence harms. Speak out.

