British Biathlon Union
Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy

STATEMENT OF INTENT

'Valuing diversity, reducing inequality and ensuring all are Athletes, Staff and Members are treated with dignity and respect are fundamental to the British Biathlon Union (BBU). We are firmly committed to developing and supporting access into our sport at every level' **Elizabeth Winfield, CEO BBU**

INTRODUCTION

The British Biathlon Union (BBU) is committed to promoting gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in line with the **International Biathlon Union (IBU) Gender Equality Strategy**. We believe that biathlon should be an inclusive sport, where everyone—regardless of gender, background, or ability—has the opportunity to participate, compete, and contribute at all levels.

Gender equality strengthens our organisation and enhances the experiences of all athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers and is central to what we do.

This policy aligns with the IBU's vision of **"equal opportunity and full inclusion for all in biathlon"**, ensuring that gender equality and diversity are embedded in the governance, participation, and development of the sport in the UK.

The BBU has a strong history in leading the way in gender equality within UK sport. This year a project 'finding the balance' was internationally recognised for the BBU's drive toward gender equality and came runners up in an IBU gender equality award. This recognised the gender balance at ever level of the organisation and the drive to create a culture and ethos for everyone to thrive.

This policy outlines our commitment to promoting gender equality across all levels of the organisation, ensuring fair and equal treatment, and actively addressing gender disparities wherever they may arise.

Why is gender equality important in sports?

- **Gender stereotyping is alive and kicking.** Girls as young as 5 years old feel they don't belong in sport. **Only 30% of parents believe playing sport is**

very important for their daughter, compared with 41% of parents for their sons.

- **There's a mental health crisis in teenage girls.** Anxiety is spiralling upwards, along with self-harm and eating disorders. By the time they reach puberty, **1.3 million girls who once loved sport are disengaging.**
- **Women in midlife are suffering** from the cumulative impact of decades of limiting gender stereotyping. A third of women aged 41-60 are not meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines of 150 minutes of physical activity per week. **84% of inactive women at this life stage want to be more active.**

We also see significant gender gaps when we look at the number of women participating in sport. In fact, the gender gap is bigger than it has ever been since reporting began. **In team sport, 7% more men than women play, and there is a shocking 22% gap between girls and boys.**

We also see clear gender gaps when we look at the number of women working in sport at every level. Women are a minority in coaching, especially at an elite level. **A recent count of leaders in the top 20 sports by participation in England showed that across the roles of CEO, Chair and Performance Director, just 24% were women.**

Gender equality in sports is more than just inclusion, it requires fair and equitable opportunities for all athletes, regardless of gender. It also involves actively challenging gender stereotypes and promoting women in leadership roles.

- It can challenge entrenched gender norms and inspire broader social change.
- It can empower women and girls worldwide.
- It can contribute to building a more inclusive and socially responsible sporting community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All BBU members, including athletes, coaches, officials, staff, and volunteers
- BBU governance structures, including the Board and committees
- All BBU activities, competitions, events, and development programmes

OUR PRINCIPLES

The BBU is guided by the following principles:

- **Equal Access**: All individuals, regardless of gender, have equal access to participation, training, and competition opportunities.

- **Fair Representation**: We are committed to ensuring balanced gender representation across decision-making roles, including our Board and committees. Our current board gender split is 40% Women.
- **Respect and Inclusion**: Discrimination, harassment, or exclusion on the basis of gender will not be tolerated.
- **Equity in Resources**: The BBU will ensure equitable distribution of resources, funding, media coverage, and promotional opportunities & content for all genders.
- **Safe Environment**: We will actively foster an environment where individuals feel safe and supported, with mechanisms in place to address any gender-based grievances or complaints.

OBJECTIVES

The BBU's Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy aims to:

- Promote **equal access** to biathlon for all genders at all levels, from grassroots participation to elite competition.
- Ensure **balanced representation** in leadership, coaching, and officiating roles.
- Provide **a safe and inclusive environment** free from discrimination, harassment, and bias.
- Encourage **equal media representation** and visibility of female and male athletes.
- Implement **fair policies and support systems** for athletes balancing sport with other commitments, including family and career.

As part of this, we commit to the following with the core areas of our organisation:

Governance & Leadership	• Strive for **at least 40% representation of each gender** on the BBU Board and key committees, in line with IBU targets. • Ensure that gender equality is integrated into **decision-making processes**, policies, and strategic planning. • Regularly review and update policies to promote diversity and inclusion at all levels.
Participation & Competition	• Promote and support **equal competition opportunities** for male and female athletes, in alignment with IBU standards. • Work towards **equal funding and resources** for all athletes, regardless of gender. • Encourage participation in biathlon among underrepresented groups, including women, non-binary

	individuals [is this possible?], and those from diverse backgrounds. • Ensure access to **high-quality training and facilities** for all athletes.
Coaching, Officiating, and Workforce Development	• Increase the number of **female and diverse coaches, officials, and support staff** through targeted recruitment and mentorship programs. • Provide **gender-sensitive training** for coaches and officials to promote inclusive coaching practices. • Implement **anti-discrimination training** for staff, officials, and volunteers.
Safe & Inclusive Environment	• Enforce a **zero-tolerance policy** on discrimination, harassment, and abuse. • Establish clear **reporting and disciplinary procedures** for any violations of equality and inclusion principles. • Promote an **athlete-centered approach** that respects individual needs, including support for parents and caregivers in sport.
Media & Representation	• Ensure **equal visibility and media coverage** for male and female athletes in BBU communications and promotional activities. • Use **gender-inclusive language and imagery** in all BBU materials. • **Promote diverse role models** to inspire future generations of athletes.

MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY

To ensure accountability for our policies, we will:

- Conduct **annual reviews** of gender equality and inclusion progress.
- Gather **data on participation, leadership, and workforce diversity** to track progress and identify areas for improvement.
- Engage with stakeholders, including athletes and staff, to ensure the policy is effectively implemented and continuously improved.

REPORTING & COMPLAINTS

Any concerns related to gender discrimination, harassment, or breaches of this policy should be reported to the designated Welfare Officer or directly to the Safeguarding lead or Secretary General.

All complaints will be treated confidentially, with appropriate action taken in line with BBU's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

CONCLUSION

The BBU is dedicated and passionate to making biathlon in the UK a **fully gender-equal sport**. This policy reflects our commitment to aligning with international best practices, particularly the IBU's Gender Equality Strategy, to ensure a fair and welcoming environment for all.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** and updated as necessary to reflect evolving best practices and feedback from stakeholders.

Approved by the British Biathlon Union Board

Date: 2 May 2025