



Clubs Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Resource





1. INTRO

The BMCs Equity Steering Group has developed this resource for clubs which would like to become more inclusive. It offers some tips around age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and mental health although some of the points may touch upon other protected characteristics.

2. REASONS:

So, why should clubs want to be inclusive?

By being inclusive clubs can help to 'future proof' themselves by making sure they continue to grow numbers through the recruitment of new members and sustain the club. It can bolster the image of a club, increase the knowledge and training of club members and give opportunities for people who are disadvantaged in some way to enjoy the activities and club benefits we all enjoy.

Maybe it will involve the club being more aware of mental health issues, or looking at how to engage young people. It could involve marketing your club via new platforms, or potentially providing the opportunity to some of your members to

attend a training course. There are lots of avenues for improving inclusivity and often club members will have a theme which is close to their hearts and that they'd like to help do something about and as a result they are often willing to support. This document will provide you with some straightforward steps on how you can ensure that your club is as open and welcoming as possible to potential members.

Frame making your club welcoming to everyone as a key way of creating an overall positive atmosphere within the club.



3. ACTION POINTS:

We have positioned most action points within their relevant groups, but some action points that can be widely applied include:

- ▶ Discuss equality at a committee meeting, review what you already do as a club, what you could better and what you'd like to do.
- ▶ It is not expected that clubs will take immediate positive action on all the areas in this document! Identify which inequalities you wish to address initially and focus on them first.
- ▶ Identify members of the club who can support you to deliver your plan – particularly some “champions” who will be able to advise the committee and/or work with potential new members when they approach the club.
- ▶ Consider the imagery you use about the club – particularly on your website, social media channels and posters. Is it suitable for the groups you are wishing to attract?
- ▶ Utilise your **local club networks** to speak to other clubs about what they are doing. Maybe you could work with another local club to make a bigger difference.
- ▶ Consider producing an equality action plan, with a starting point of where you are now, and a vision of where you'd like to get to.
- ▶ Have some club members attend equality related training, such as Mental Health First Aid.
- ▶ Review your club's constitution, rules, codes of conduct and other club policies and procedures to ensure they contain appropriate language, and are amended to support the steps you wish to take to tackle inequalities.
- ▶ Run some activity days aimed towards some of the under-represented groups. Work with people who belong to that group and listen to what they would like to see delivered by the club.
- ▶ Review your club constitution, rules, codes of conduct and other club policies and procedures to ensure they contain appropriate language, and are amended to support the steps you wish to take to tackle inequalities.

AGE:

A lot of clubs struggle to recruit young members, with the average age of many clubs potentially being an off-putting factor for younger people.

- ▶ Offer pathways for young people to join your club.
- ▶ Work with existing younger members of your club – ask them what they like about the club and what things they think should change to attract more younger people.
- ▶ Ensure that the imagery you use for your club reflects the full age range so that potential members can see other younger people being represented.
- ▶ Young people will often have less money so a reduced club membership fee may go a long way to encourage them to join.
- ▶ Ensure that you have “buddies” or “champions” of a suitable age and/or with experience of working with younger members who can support the new members and welcome them into your club.
- ▶ Consider offering a family membership to encourage existing members to bring their children along to club meets, and to encourage new families to join your club.
- ▶ Checkout the BMC’s **Child Safeguarding Policy** for working with under 18 year olds, particularly if you are looking to allow under 18’s to join without a parent or guardian joining too.
- ▶ Contact climbing walls near where your club is active and think about forming links. This will provide opportunities for indoor climbers to develop their skills and feel confident to join your club.
- ▶ Review the framework for becoming a member of your club. Are there ways it could be improved, for instance some clubs may require a high standard of climbing or walking to become a member, but could more novice climbers be offered the opportunity, perhaps as preliminary members, that allows them to learn skills and become more independent as well as feeling part of the club.
- ▶ Where and how you market your club and activities is important, for instance Instagram generally has a younger audience than some other social media platforms.

ETHNICITY:

Climbing and walking in the past have not been very ethnically diverse, which is reflected in the membership of many clubs.

- ▶ The number of climbing walls has increased considerably over the last 20 years and if you go to many climbing walls you will find the climbers more ethnically diverse than most clubs. This is an area where clubs could look at marketing their activities but its worth baring in mind that if everyone in your club is white it may be intimidating for a person of colour to approach your club.
- ▶ **Being representative in the marketing that you use is important to help motivate people to take part.** With 14% of the UK population being non-white it is an area many clubs and organisations may be able to take some positive actions on.
- ▶ Your club can organise some days for under-represented groups. Mountain Training England offers some funding support: [MORE INFO](#)
- ▶ Other useful info: [MORE INFO](#)



GENDER:

As BMC clubs age the number of women generally decreases

- ▶ As mentioned in the other areas, images and marketing used should be as representative of the broader population as possible. More than 50% of the UK's population is female. You'll see most of the BMC's media and marketing output is of similar breakdown. This is believed to be one of the reasons that the BMC has increased its percentage of female members over the last decade. We should also look beyond images, as even in some of the UK's bigger climbing clubs, they often have NO female authors included. Greater effort should be made by clubs to encourage and facilitate female authorship.
- ▶ Please remember that gender is not confined to the binary genders of Male and Female. Please see the LGBTQ section below for more information and guidance.
- ▶ Some aspects associated with female anatomy are relevant to people of different genders. For example, people who menstruate are usually assigned female at birth, but they may possess a different gender to female. By making an effort to understand the physical needs of members, you can make more people feel welcome and safe. You could ensure that the club has a supply of sanitary products available to anybody who needs them when you are out at the crag or on the hills and make sure that this is known to all members.
- ▶ Training around the physiological needs of women could be provided to club leaders and it made known to members possess this knowledge. This would make more women feel safer and comfortable in the outdoors.
- ▶ Women still face stereotyping in the outdoors, it is useful to be aware of these unhelpful stereotypes, so that you can aim to avoid imposing them on female members. For example, comments that use gendered language, such as the class "don't be such a girl" should not be made, to ensure that women feel welcome.
- ▶ Women frequently report receiving unwarranted comments and advice. To make women feel more comfortable, it is important that members of different genders ask women how they are getting along, and offer support if they want it, rather than immediately imposing advice. This applies to interacting with people of all genders – but it is an issue disproportionately experienced by women.
- ▶ Women who are mothers have highlighted the struggle of balancing childcare with climbing. A fantastic way to better include mothers would be to advertise family friendly sessions or promote a buddy system for parents who wish to climb and can take it in turns to watch after each other's children.

DISABILITY:

Most BMC clubs have an aging demographic and as we get older we are more likely to suffer an impairment. There may be knowledge we can gain and training we can do to support friends or new members to be involved with activities.

- ▶ Pick up the Climbing and Walking for all: Disability awareness publications. Consider getting some club members to do the Climbing for all: Disability Awareness in Climbing training course.
- ▶ See the BMCs Visual Impairment in Hill Walking document for tips on this or www.viclimbing.com for info on climbing.
- ▶ If providing VI specific sessions, or events – promote the activity with local Blind Societies, and inform National Organisations such as British Blind Sport who can promote the opportunity to further networks
- ▶ Use social media to promote the Club and services – Facebook and Twitter are very popular with VI people, think about the overuse of hashtags and abbreviations which may make the tweet more difficult to understand. You can also include a written description of images for being with VI, below images include: [Image Description: X] or [Alternative Text: X]
- ▶ There may be funding through Sport England to help your club do activities for people with a disability:
[MORE INFO](#)

LGBTQ:

LGBTQ are not necessarily under-represented in climbing and walking but have been sometimes lacking visibility and there may be a lack of knowledge in clubs about what LGBTQ means.

What's the difference between lesbian, gay, bi, queer and trans?

- ▶ **Lesbian**, gay, bi and trans (or LGBT) people are often talked about as one group. But there are important differences. The terms lesbian, gay and bi describe some people's 'sexual orientation'.
- ▶ **Sexual orientation** is a person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person.
- ▶ **Lesbian** refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards women.
- ▶ **Gay** refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards men. It is also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality, and some women identify as gay rather than lesbian.
- ▶ **Bi (or bi)** refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards more than one gender.
- ▶ **Queer** is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- ▶ **Trans** is a word that describes people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.
- ▶ **Non-binary** is an umbrella term for a person whose gender identity does not fit naturally into the generic categories of male and female.
- ▶ **Pronouns** are words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation. For example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people prefer gender neutral language like they/their or alternatively ze/zir.
- Asking someone which pronouns they prefer helps you avoid making assumptions and potentially getting it wrong. It also gives the person the opportunity to tell you what they prefer. If you make a mistake, apologise, correct yourself and move on.

- Additionally Introducing pronouns onto official paperwork, communications such as emails and social media messages as well as introducing pronoun badges for members to wear can also help to normalise and make easier the expressing of pronouns.
- ▶ Use gender neutral language as much as possible, especially when a non-binary person is taking part. Examples include encouraging your team by shouting 'Go *team name*' rather than 'Go girls/boys' and using the gender neutral pronoun 'they' in place of 'he/she'.
- ▶ Tackling **homophobic, biphobic and transphobic** language creates a better environment for everyone in sport. Even if people say language is 'banter' or not meant offensively, words and phrases that use sexual orientation or gender identity as a joke need to be challenged consistently.
- ▶ **Gender dysphoria:**
 - Some trans and non binary individuals struggle with a sense of unease due to the mismatch between the physical self and their gender. Some individuals will wear clothing and or hair pieces to hide or change the appearance of certain physical features. The wearing of harnesses and helmets may accentuate these features and so make the individual uncomfortable.
 - Individuals wishing to reduce the size of their chest may also use clothing called chest binders: **Chest Binding: A Physician's Guide | Pride in Practice**. If people are used to wearing

chest binders, then they should have worked out their own care routine however please encourage members to hydrate regularly, ensure they are not overheating and if they feel uncomfortable to take a break from the activity and/or remove their binder. To remove their binder they will need a discreet space to do so and so may wish to finish the activity early and return home.

- ▶ **Surgery;** Please also be mindful that trans and non-binary people may undergo surgery. As with any other member undergoing surgical treatment please ensure they are in a fit state to take part in the activity planned. For trans and non-binary individuals please also be mindful that talking about surgery can be very personal so please be cautious and discreet when assessing this.
- ▶ Update your club's values so that you can refer to how discriminating or demeaning behaviour won't be tolerated or accepted.
- ▶ **Some personal stories and perspectives from some LGBTQ climbers and walkers can be found on the BMC website**

MENTAL HEALTH:

Around 1 in 4 people will experience some kind of mental illness during the course of a year. It is likely that members and prospective members may need some support, and helping people to take part in an activity may even be a life saver.

- Consider getting some members of your club to do a Mental Health first aid training course.
- If you are concerned about the mental health of a club member, encourage them to seek professional help. It is important to be supportive of those struggling with their mental health, but know your limits and what is appropriate.
- Checkout the BMC [**Adult safeguarding policy**](#).
- Consider partnering up with organisations like [**Black Dog Outdoor**](#) and [**Climbing Alongside Mental Health**](#).



Can the BMC help your club be more inclusive? Get in touch if you'd like some help from the BMC Equity Steering Group. Email [**James@thebmc.co.uk**](mailto:James@thebmc.co.uk)



Other Equality Diversity Inclusion related links

Sport England Club Matters resources

www.sportenglandclubmatters.com

Sport Wales Club Solutions resources

www.clubsolutions.wales

Chwaraeon Cymru Atebion Clwb

www.atebionclwb.cymru

Activity Alliance, disability inclusion sport

www.activityalliance.org.uk