

**Equality Act 2010 – Fact Sheet (Overview)**

Clubs must not discriminate against any member, visitor or guest on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics contained in the Equality Act in the provision of its goods and services.

Discrimination is treating someone less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.

**The protected characteristics are:**

Age, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity. The ones that are most likely to affect golf clubs are:

**Age**

In relation to age, people under the age of 18 are not covered by the Equality Act but only in relation to their age. The other protected characteristics still apply.

Owing to the introduction of the statutory instrument covering age related provisions, it is lawful to group people by age when determining their subscription levels.

**Sex – Access to the Course**

Reasonable access to the course must be permitted by both genders. Where a club consists of male and female membership Wales Golf would advocate the following:

Men and Women who are 7 day members should be able to play both competitive and non-competitive golf at the weekends and clubs should be encouraged to introduce alternative day qualifiers at the weekend for women who are unable to participate in the traditional weekday competitions. The Club should also be encouraged to permit men and women to play together in these separate weekend competitions with the ability to mark each other’s cards.

Although equality legislation does not dictate that clubs must admit women to a men’s competition or men to a women’s competition simply because they wish, we would encourage all clubs to run a variety of open competitions throughout the month (where everyone can play together). With this in mind clubs are able to run mixed competitions using the guidance below entitled ‘Mixed Tee Competitions’.

Clubs are also encouraged to allow enough time at the weekends for social golf which should be accessible equally by both genders. We would also recommend that a variety of competitions are available within the month equal access to tee-times

**Sex – Captaincy**

Clubs should have a documented non-discriminatory procedure in place for the nominations of the person to be proposed as Captain of the Club. Ideally a Committee of men and women deciding upon the candidate.

**Disability**

Clubs must ensure that they permit disabled people, who require the use of a buggy, to access the course when it is open to non disabled people. They should carry out reasonable adjustments to ensure this happens.

**Marriage & Civil Partnership**

If a club has married couple’s competitions, they need to be aware that same sex couples must also be permitted to compete in these competitions. This is the same for joint memberships and family memberships of same sex couples.

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**Mixed Tee Competitions**

Whilst the majority of qualifying competitions are run for a specific group of players e.g. men, women or seniors, using a single specific set of tees, clubs are now increasingly running competitions for single and mixed genders using different sets of tees.

Examples of such competitions include:

* Junior competitions in which both boys and girls compete, with the boys playing off a set of tees rated for men and the girls competing from tees having a women’s rating.
* Competitions open to men, women and juniors.
* Single gender competitions in which some players may elect to play from different sets of tees e.g. seniors in which players have a choice of traditional medal tees or forward tees (particularly useful at relatively long and difficult courses) or women with silver division playing from the traditional tees and bronze playing from the forward tees.

In all cases, the tees used must have been rated for the genders that will play from them.

In virtually all cases, the different sets of tees will have been allocated different *Standard Scratch Scores* by Wales Golf. Two issues arise; how to determine the competition winner and how to adjust handicaps in an equitable manner.

1. **How to determine the competition winner**

In order to maintain equity, the *Playing Handicaps* of some of the competitors may require to be adjusted. In *Qualifying Competitions* any adjustments are applied for competition result purposes only. The adjusted *Competition Handicap Allowance* must not be used to establish the CSS or for the purpose of handicap alteration.

Competitions in which competitors play from different sets of tees may be in three formats - medal stroke play, stableford and par/bogey.

**1. Medal Stroke Play**

This is the format most easily understood and the simplest to administer. Each player playing the course with the higher SSS must be awarded a *Competition Handicap Allowance* equivalent to their Playing Handicap + the difference in the two Standard Scratch Scores.

***Example*** - Men’s White Tees, SSS 70; Ladies Red Tees, SSS 72. Ladies SSS - Men’s SSS = 2 therefore all Ladies handicaps should be increased by 2 strokes.

**2. Stableford Competitions**

In Stableford competitions it is the relationship between the Par and SSS that determines player scoring and the score that represents ‘*playing to handicap*’.

When players play from different tees the Par / SSS relationship may well be different for each set of tees e.g. White tees of Par 72 / SSS 70 (Par - SSS = 2) Red tees of Par 70 / SSS 70

(Par - SSS = 0).

In this scenario, a woman playing to her handicap off the red tees would return 36 points, whilst a man playing to his handicap off the white tees would return 38 points, therefore the women’s *Competition Handicap Allowance* must be increased by two.

In the following example, the men playing from White tees with a Par of 69 / SSS 72 require 33 points to ‘*play to handicap’*. The ladies playing from Red tees with a Par of 74 / SSS 74 require 36 points. The men now require an additional 3 scores to equate the two scores to ‘*play to handicap*’. The men receive a *Competition Handicap Allowance* of +3.

In all cases where the Par and SSS relationship is different, f**or competition result purposes only**, the *Competition Handicap Allowances* will differ dependent upon which set of tees the players play from.

Players playing from the set of tees with the higher target (SSS) to ‘play to handicap’ will receive the same *Competition Handicap Allowance* as their *Playing Handicap*, but others will receive additional strokes.

In all cases the players receiving the extra shots have to ‘earn’ the points by recording a score on the additional holes at which they receive the allowance.

**3. Par/Bogey Competitions**

Similar principles apply as to those for Stableford. The players having the ‘harder’ target to ‘play to handicap’ require a higher *Competition Stroke Allowance*.

For example, men playing from White tees SSS 72, Par 69 require 3 down to ‘play to handicap’. Women playing from Red tees SSS 73, Par 71 require l2 down to ‘play to handicap’, therefore the men receive a *Competition Handicap Allowance* of +1.

1. **Adjusting Handicaps & Calculating the CSS**

If separate CSS calculations are made for each set of tees used it is often the case that the resulting adjustments are different, and this can be difficult to explain or justify. The difference is more pronounced when a small field of one gender is dominated by a larger field of the opposite gender.

A more equitable solution is to use the performance relative to the SSS of the tees used for all the competitors in the field to calculate one adjustment. The details of the calculations are given in Appendix B Clause 2.1 to 2.4 of the CONGU Manual. Examples 4 & 5 in Appendix B demonstrate how this can be applied in practice.

The use of the *Single CSS Adjustment* is recommended for all situations in which players play in a *Qualifying Competition* from different sets of tees.

CONGU are currently reviewing Appendix O *(Events in which Competitors Play from Different Sets of Tees)* with a view to expand the guidance and provide additional examples to cover more situations.



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**Disabled Golfers (reasonable adjustments)**

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and that impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Clubs must ensure that they permit disabled people, who require the use of a buggy, to access the course when it is open to non disabled people. They should carry out reasonable adjustments to ensure this happens.

This should not be a question of judgement for the individual Club. It is a matter of medical judgement. However, a degree of flexibility is essential for any policy to succeed. Some disabilities are so obvious that in a number of cases the insistence on a certificate may be unnecessary.

It would appear that many clubs still ban the use of buggies to disabled golfers when the course is wet. This is unlawful. Many of these clubs have not completed the process of assessing the course and making reasonable adjustments.

Players who demonstrably have a genuine incapacity to play golf unless aided by the use of the buggy should be allowed to use them but may be required to use a specific route, and / or find that a shortened course is in operation. The use of the 90 degree rule could also be considered.

**Example:**

Windlesham Golf Club have created a “Traffic Light System” Buggy & Trolley Status that can be used when conditions allow.

* Green – No Restrictions, All Trolleys & Buggies Allowed On 1-18..
* Amber – Buggies on Holes 1 – 6 Safe Route, Using the Buggy Pathway and 90 Degree Ruling, then return via Maintenance Track beside 13th / 9th. Map Provided.

Electric / Pull Trolleys Allowed & All Carry On Holes 1-18.

* Red – Buggies on Holes 1 – 6 Safe Route, Using the Buggy Pathway and 90 Degree Ruling, then return via Maintenance Track beside 13th / 9th. Map Provided

Pull Trolleys For Essential Users Only & All Carry On Holes 1-18.

To help reduce damage through the Winter period, Windlesham Golf Club encourage all Golfers to please Carry if physically able, this would be greatly appreciated.

Windlesham Golf Club will indicate if the course or a part of the course is not in a suitable / Safe condition for use on that day.

This decision will be communicated to the golfers through several methods:-

* On The Golf Clubs Twitter Account
* The Golf Clubs Website.
* Golf Course Information Board.
* Contacting the Pro Shop.

This decision will be reviewed on a daily basis and all decisions recorded.

**For further information on how to make your facility more inclusive, gain example policies and procedures and for general guidance please get in touch with your Regional Development Officers OR the National Golf Club Advisory Association (NGCAA).**

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