



A Three-Year Inclusive Club Plan (2023/24/25)

London Otters Rowing Club Inclusive Statement

London Otters Rowing Club is committed to creating an inclusive Club, representing and reflecting the diversity of the UK.

Inclusivity is one of our five key values of the Club, and why the Club was originally founded; to create a space where minorities could feel comfortable and safe learning and enjoying the sport. We are genuinely devoted to being an inclusive club, open to all who wish to participate and progress irrespective of sexuality, gender expression and identity, race, beliefs, ability and age.

We pledge for better representation, recruitment, culture, and community engagement to help everyone enjoy the positive impacts that rowing provides, and we are challenging ourselves to ensure that Diversity Equity and Inclusion is hardwired into everything the London Otters Rowing Club does.

This Inclusive Plan aims to support long term and sustainable change and will be a living resource and the club has elected a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion officer to help deliver this. We commit to open dialogue and this plan will continue to be developed over time, so please provide feedback.



What do we mean by inclusion, equality & equity, diversity, and intersectionality?

Inclusion is the act of making all people within a society feel valued and included. Inclusion is the process of removing barriers to participation and learning so that everyone can benefit from the opportunities on offer. Inclusion is about the culture of your club and is everyone's responsibility. An inclusive culture welcomes diversity and actively seeks to attract new people.

Equality and Equity is about creating a more fair society. Making sure people are treated fairly and ensuring access to equal resources to all (Equality) but also recognising that because of the different opportunities we are offered in life some may require more resources than others (Equity). This means that we recognise and acknowledge that people are different and that those differences require us to meet their needs differently. If we don't consider differences then we may be creating an environment that makes it difficult for some people to join in, participate or achieve their potential. Equality law provides protection against discrimination.

Diversity means recognising, valuing and respecting someone's background, knowledge, skills and experiences. It means placing a positive value on differences and individual life experiences. Inclusive environments encourage diversity and vice versa.

"LGBTQ people of colour face significant discriminatory challenges with their intersectional identities from multiple groups in society" – Stonewall

Intersectionality is about fighting discrimination *within* discrimination, tackling inequalities *within* inequalities, and protecting minorities *within* minorities. The exclusion of intersectional people from our communities is evident, for example, when LGBTQ+-focused organisations have little knowledge of race issues. A gay person has to deal with homophobia. An asian person has to deal with racism. But an asian gay person will have to deal with homophobia *and* racism (often at the same time). It is often the case that they will face racism inside the LGBTQ+ community and homophobia in the asian community, generating a feeling that they do not completely belong in one group.



Our Commitments: A Summary

1. Transforming Recruitment

We have reviewed the systems and processes that are in place in order to make improvements in recruitment, this will be continually monitored and updated to ensure we are on the correct trajectory.

2. Setting A Gold Standard For Inclusion

We have and will continue to create a programme of events to support an inclusive culture, backed by PR campaigns focussing on events and membership.

3. A Club For All Of Us

We have a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, appointed by the membership. The role will help us to continue to identify and champion diverse role models within the club.

4. Measuring Our Success

We will share our diversity monitoring annually at the AGM, and adapt our measures and systems if needed.



Transforming Recruitment

- Engage and collaborate with local BAME, Trans, Older, Disabled LGBTQ+ groups to understand their needs, inform the club's offer/marketing and grow a network of ambassadors.
- Newham is a diverse borough which will have BAME LGBTQ+ residents, and Newham Council may have existing relationships with LGBTQ+ community groups such as our recent engagement and fundraising for the local charity Positive East. We should engage with the council and integrate in the local area with events.
- The 50% allocation of places that are currently only available to non -cisgendered men will be expanded to include BAME rowers. This is in keeping with the commitment to better represent our local community by reflecting the population of BAME residents in London based on the Census 2021
- We have approach organisations who support LGBTQ+ Asylum seekers and immigrants such as London Friends with regards to the regular bursary spot and will aim continue to work with other organisations including UK Black Pride, Mermaids, Positive East etc
- Announce with enough lead time so prospective Otters can pay in two non refundable instalments.
- Share LORC's plans on our website, as a reminder of the club's commitment to inclusivity. The waiting list should be transparent to emphasise we are inclusive, and that not getting a place on a Pups course isn't discriminatory. Clearly documenting our long-term plans for BAME and other minority groups' inclusion will mean when subsequent committees are elected the momentum is sustained.



Setting A Gold Standard For Inclusion

- Host an open day with invites to BAME, Trans, non-binary and people who struggle with mobility or visual impairment, LGBTQ+ youths and other communities we wish to attract, where people can have a tour of the club, try out in the tank, and take info packs to away. Get their feedback and try to understand the barriers to participation that they face. We have already done so with Not A Phase and London Youth Rowing.
- Host local community-based activities such as the recent Erg-a-thon and ergs during events at the docks such as Rainbow Races. Lose the lycra (it can be off putting to many – particularly at the start), row in public, raise money for Black Pride and engage with the community, encouraging them to visit us.
- Invite waiting list to events, fundraisers to and adding them to the mailing group for our fFriends of the Otters newsletter keep them involved and interested.
- The club should introduce committee members to new Otterpups from the very first session with a casual meeting after their first row so they can ask questions and feel comfortable and integrated, especially if there are very few minorities (BAME/LBT+) in that intake.
- Commit to only using the trans + BAME rainbow 'Progress' flag (see below) at events to portray our values.
- Using Instagram/Facebook targeted marketing to promote the pup courses before they're announced.
- Flyers and posters are functional – people do look at the community posters and what's going on in their local coffee shops and bars.
- Approach radio, newspapers and other media networks prominent in communities we wish to focus on, e.g. The Asian Radio Network, which will be effective in promoting the club and events (e.g., Rainbow Races.)
- Support and attend events such as Black Pride & Trans Pride to emphasise LORC's commitment to the BAME community and our intentions to become a truly inclusive club.



Progress rainbow: Designed by Daniel Quasar in 2018, it adds five new colours to emphasise progress around inclusion. The flag includes black and brown stripes to represent people of colour, and baby blue, pink and white, which are used in the Transgender Pride Flag.



A Club For All Of Us

- We need to encourage more under-represented Women, Deaf and Disabled, BAME, older, non binary and LBT+ members to stand for Committee.
- Photoshoot at the docks of all willing members for general club use, so we have an array of genders, race, body types etc for PR.
- We have a prominent social culture which many members participate in, but these are mainly held in bars which often have a cisgender-white gay crowd and occasionally venues which have been linked to discrimination. We should be conscious of what our events and actions project at all times.

Measuring Our Success

- We can expect three Pup courses per year, so almost 150 people will pass through the club over the duration of this three-year plan. With the listed measures in place, we can start to rebalance the membership so that it reflects the population in London.
- The annual Otter Census allows us to monitor diversity, which will be reviewed with diversity data from each Otterpup intake.
- We will start sharing our diversity monitoring annually at the AGM so everyone is aware of the progress, or lack of, and adapt our measures and systems if needed.



Conclusion

Delivering this three-year plan will meet our ambition to create a transformed, modern membership where we feel proud to be part of an inclusive, diverse club.

These ambitions will be delivered by both Committees and members committing to create real change, as well as each of us working to embed inclusive behaviours into our everyday practices.

We would love input and support from members. If they would like to get involved to reach out to the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer.