



Guidance on the participation of trans people in gymnastics competition

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GUIDANCE ON THE INCLUSION OF TRANS PEOPLE IN ALL FORMS OF GYMNASTICS ACTIVITY

The following guidance has been developed to support clubs to take action that will help to ensure the activities they provide are accessible to trans people.

Supporting a new member

You should be welcoming to anyone who wishes to take part in gymnastics and accept everyone in the gender in which they present without question. Remember that it is illegal to discriminate against anyone who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment in relation to the provision of services and in employment. If you don't know if someone is trans, you should treat them accordingly based on the gender in which they present.

Pronouns

All your staff and volunteers need to understand the importance of using the correct pronouns when addressing someone who is trans. When we refer to someone, we often use male and female pronouns i.e. he/him and she/her. In the case of a trans person, you should always try to use the appropriate pronoun based on their self-identified gender. Some trans people e.g. those who are non-binary, may prefer to use gender-neutral pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir. If you are unsure, you should ask, what pronouns they use.

As well as focusing on the language used by staff and volunteers it is important to encourage other participants to use appropriate terms. Hearing others referring to them using the incorrect pronoun can be deeply upsetting and uncomfortable for a trans person.

Disclosure of information

An individual does not have to disclose to you that they are trans and should never be forced to do so. If they do choose to share this information with you and it is otherwise confidential, you must respect their privacy and not disclose this information without their explicit consent. If someone is new to the club and has already transitioned, they may never wish this information to be disclosed so it is vital that you respect their wishes. Remember that it is a criminal offence to disclose the trans status of anyone with a Gender Recognition Certificate without their agreement

If someone voluntarily discloses to you that they or their child is trans, you should ask if they have any questions or concerns. A trans person should not be restricted from taking part in club activities in their self-identified gender, however there may be restriction in taking part in competition if they are a male to female trans person. You should explain your club equality policy and if relevant the British Gymnastics policy for the participation of trans people in gymnastics competition.

You should agree with the individual what information is to be shared with others and, if necessary, how this should be shared.

Criminal Record Checks

Some trans people may be concerned at the prospect of completing a criminal record check. The Disclosure and Barring Service provides a confidential checking process for trans applicants who do not wish to reveal details of their previous name and gender to the person who has asked them to complete the DBS check. For more information, contact the Sensitive Applications team at sensitive@db.sgsi.gov.uk. Access NI provides a similar service. For further information, contact the Operations Manager on their Helpline number 0300 200 7888. In Scotland, criminal records checks are accessed as part of the Protection of

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Vulnerable Groups (S) Act 2007. For further information please contact the Ethics, Welfare & Conduct team on safeguarding@scottishgymnastics.org

Collecting personal information at registration

British Gymnastics membership registration offers options for fields such as 'title' to include the option to select the gender-neutral title Mx, in addition to Mr, Mrs. You may wish to adapt your registration and application forms in a similar way. You could provide a blank space so the individual can enter their chosen title or, if they prefer, leave it blank.

In relation to gender, there may be no reason to collect this information for recreational participants if your sessions are mixed. Not requesting information on gender and offering mixed classes are small steps that can support inclusion. If you do not require gender but feel it would be helpful to know, you may prefer to allow people to leave this information blank or tick a 'prefer not to say'.

Gender is not a mandatory requirement to be a member of British Gymnastics. On joining or renewing membership, gender is voluntary unless you wish to participate in competition. If trans members wish to provide this information, they can select the gender to which they most closely identify. There is also a 'prefer not to say' option.

Anyone who wishes to take part in competition must select a gender. Trans gymnasts under the age of 12 and trans males can compete without restriction in their self-identified gender. Once a trans female is over the age of 12, additional rules apply to ensure fair competition. Clubs should make trans girls aware of the policy prior to reaching the age of 12 so that appropriate steps can be taken to support the gymnast, and subject to complying with the British Gymnastics policy, enable them to continue to compete. Please refer to the policy for full details.

Toilets & Changing Facilities

Although trans individuals should be able to use the facilities according to the gender in which they identify, some trans people may feel more comfortable using gender-neutral spaces.

While it is recognised that not every club has the option to provide different changing spaces, having some gender-neutral facilities and private cubicles is ideal. This helps accommodate people who are non-binary or genderfluid as well as people who may wish to have privacy, which may be for a variety of reasons. If you are moving or upgrading your facilities this would be a good opportunity to provide some inclusive facilities.

It is not appropriate to insist that a trans person only uses the toilets that are meant for disabled people, or unisex toilets, unless there are no other facilities available

The use of toilets and changing facilities often causes debate. If anyone raises concerns that a trans person is using the 'wrong' facilities, it is important to explain the provisions of Equality Act 2010 and your club policy and indicate that with limited exception (e.g. sports competition) the law requires that trans people are treated in the way that anyone else that shares the gender to which they identify. If an individual remains unhappy about a trans person using facilities appropriate to their gender identity, then they should make alternative arrangements. It is important to recognise that trans people may feel vulnerable themselves so inappropriate conduct from other staff, members and/or their parents or volunteers needs to be addressed to avoid any escalation.

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If you have someone new at the club who shares with you that they are trans, it may be helpful to ask them about whether they are happy to use the appropriate gender facilities or whether they would prefer an alternative arrangement. This may depend on whether the individual is a child or where they are in the process of transitioning and whether they have undergone any gender reassignment surgery.

When making any arrangements for the use of changing facilities, it is important to consider the wider safeguarding arrangements relating to children and ensure that adults are not getting changed at the same time in the same space as children.

Residential events

It is important to consider the needs of any trans gymnasts when planning a residential event or trip. You should avoid making assumptions and should consult with the gymnast and where appropriate their parents in advance to discuss whether they have any concerns about the trip.

It is usual practice for gymnasts to share rooms. As far as possible, trans people should be able to sleep in a room appropriate to their gender identity. However, some trans people may not feel comfortable doing this and in such cases alternative sleeping arrangements should be considered for privacy reasons. It is important to consider the options in advance and find out if they would prefer a separate room if this option would be available.

If you are planning any additional activities on your trip, it is important this is discussed with the trans person so that any concerns or additional considerations can be addressed in advance.

Alternative arrangements for a trans gymnast should be provided where it is proportionate to do so, and it supports the legitimate aim of inclusion. Where appropriate a risk assessment should be conducted particularly paying due regard to any safeguarding issues that could arise. Any assessment should be carried out in consultation with the gymnast and their parent (where appropriate) and any measures should be implemented in a discreet way that respects the trans gymnast's rights and dignity. British Gymnastics can provide further advice to clubs if required.

Supporting someone who transitions as an existing participant

If someone at your club talks to you about their feelings about their gender identity, it is important to not look shocked and simply listen and reassure them. You should not try to tell them it is a phase. You should ask them how they feel at the club and whether they have been able to talk to their parents. How they proceed is up to the individual, but you should continue to support them, particularly if they have not been able to tell anyone else at this point.

It can be a difficult time for a trans person who makes the decision to transition having previously been known to other participants in the opposite gender. Sometimes it can be helpful to prepare a confidential memorandum of understanding that sets out how the trans person will be supported in their transition process. It should be a document that can evolve and be amended and may include areas such as:

- An agreed date of transition (change of gender role).
- Who needs to be informed and the arrangements for sharing this information.
- What they wish to be called (name and pronouns)
- How they will be supported on a personal level.
- Other steps that the club will take to support inclusion.
- Arrangement for changing and toilets.

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Some trans people may try out a new name before making a final decision. This should be supported by the club and explanations provided as agreed with the trans person. It is important for everyone to try and use the trans person's new name and appropriate pronouns as it may help them to feel confident in their gender identity.

Name changes

Although some trans people choose to change their name by statutory declaration or deed poll (parental consent is required for anyone under 16) this should not be necessary for them to change the name they use at this club or for their British Gymnastics membership. A person wishing to change this information should be treated with respect like any other person updating their record. There is no requirement to have gender recognition certificate or any other legal documentation to do this. It is important to remember that it is a criminal offence to disclose someone's gender history if they do hold a gender recognition certificate.

Where a trans person is already a British Gymnastics member and wishes to change their gender details, they can do this themselves by signing in to their British Gymnastics membership account. If a name change is required, the Customer Service Support team can make the required change which they will do in a confidential and sensitive manner.

If an existing member transitions, they are also entitled to request replacement certificates for any British Gymnastics qualification that they hold in previous name and title.

British Gymnastics may need to retain some information relating to a person's trans status if they are a trans female and are participating in competitive gymnastics. Any information of this nature will remain confidential and limited only to those who need the information to comply with the British Gymnastics policy for the participation of trans people in gymnastics competition.

Transphobia, bullying and harassment

Clubs should ensure that they have well-promoted anti-bullying policies that make it clear that transphobic bullying or harassment will not be tolerated.

It is important to recognise that some transphobic behaviours could be a precursor to hate crimes. If an incident occurs or crime is alleged, and it is perceived that the perpetrator was motivated by a hostility or prejudice against a person who is or is believed to be trans, the perpetrator could be charged with a hate crime, which criminal justice agencies consider as a very serious offence.

Transphobia is the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as trans. Transphobic bullying involves saying cruel things to someone because they are or are thought to be trans or because they are associated with someone who is trans.

Examples of transphobic bullying include deliberately using the wrong pronouns, asking questions about things like their gender, body or medical treatment in an intrusive, inappropriate or repeated way of making offensive comments about them or someone they are close to who is trans.

A person harasses another if they engage in unwanted conduct related to gender reassignment, which has the purpose or effect of violating the other person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

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A lot of people put up with bullying or harassment, hoping that it will stop. In most cases it does not stop unless a person in authority intervenes and action is taken. Clubs need to make it clear that incidents of bullying or harassment are always unacceptable, and staff and volunteers need to take responsibility for challenging this behaviour.

Dealing with concerns from other people

If you have parents or other participants raising concerns connected to a trans person, you should point out your policy of inclusion and your legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. You should provide training to all staff and volunteers to equip them to be able to respond to concerns. Confidential information about a trans person should never be shared. If any issue is raised that involves the personal circumstances of a particular gymnast, the club should respond that they are unable to comment on individual cases.

Being proactive

It is important not to wait until someone who is trans approaches your club. There are many steps that clubs can take that would help to reassure a trans person (and their family) who may be thinking about participating in gymnastics that the club would provide an inclusive and supportive environment. Although the duty for public sector bodies to promote understanding, tackle prejudice and foster good relations may not apply to many clubs, the principles are a helpful guide. The following are examples of actions that you could take that will help promote awareness and support inclusion:

- Have an equality policy that highlights that gender reassignment is one of nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure your anti-bullying policy prevents the bullying and/or harassment of trans people, acknowledging that not all people who may experience transphobic bullying are included within the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.
- Ensuring your policies are visible within the club e.g. on notice boards and on the club website and that all new members, employees and volunteers are provided with information about the policies and required to sign up to codes of conduct.
- Review whether it is necessary to divide club activities based on gender e.g. separate sessions for boys and girls or splitting groups based on gender as this can make it harder for some trans people to participate
- Avoid forcing people to wear specific training clothes based on gender. It is always a good idea to offer some gender-neutral club kit rather than forcing someone to train in clothing that makes them feel uncomfortable and does not match with their own sense of gender.
- Try to use gender neutral language terms. You may not always know that you have a trans person in your club so it can make a big difference to someone who is trans if you refer to groups of people as 'everyone' rather than girls or boys or other gendered terms such as 'lads' or 'ladies and gentlemen'.
- Review your club registration forms and look at introducing options for trans people who may refer to themselves using gender-neutral titles e.g. Mx.
- If you have your own premises, look at whether you can provide some gender-neutral facilities with provision for private changes spaces within.
- Be welcoming to new members and be available to answer any questions that the member or their parent might wish to ask.
- Ensure club staff and volunteers have had equality and diversity training and specific awareness training and understand how to support trans people

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Additional sources of information

Allsorts: Supports & empowers children & young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure (LGBTU) of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

www.allsortsyouth.org.uk

Gender Identity Research & Education Society (GIRES): Aims to improve the lives of trans and gender non-conforming people of all ages, including those who are non-binary and non-gender. Provides a range of free e-learning course.

www.gires.org.uk

Gendered Intelligence: Aims to increase understandings of gender diversity, working with the trans community and those who impact on trans lives, particularly specialising in supporting young trans people under the age of 21.

<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

Mermaids: Aims to raise awareness about gender nonconformity in children and young people amongst professionals and the general public.

www.mermaids.org.uk

Stonewall: Aims to support organisations to make a difference for LGBT people.

www.stonewall.org.uk

LGBT Youth Scotland: Aims is to play a leading role in the provision of quality youth work to LGBTI young people that promotes their health and wellbeing, and to be a valued and influential partner in LGBTI equality and human rights.

info@lgbtyouth.org.uk