

BADMINTON England

Guidance for Badminton Clubs on welcoming transsexual players.

Introduction

BADMINTON England is committed to equality and diversity and we believe that everyone has a right to play and enjoy the sport of badminton. We are working to ensure that this open and inclusive attitude is reflected in our network of badminton clubs and associations.

This guidance document is intended to increase the understanding of club officials in respect of transsexual people who currently or may wish to play our sport.

Firstly, here are some key terms:

Transgender person

The term transgender person or trans person are umbrella terms to cover a number of specific terms such as transsexual men, transsexual women, intersex people, androgynous and polygender people, cross-dressing and transvestite people. Any transgender person should be welcomed into your club and would not necessarily need any special considerations.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is one of a number of protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 and is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. This legislation prohibits discrimination against a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process, or part of a process, for the purpose of reassigning their gender.

Transsexual person

This term refers to someone with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. We use the term transsexual man to describe a female-to-male transsexual person and transsexual woman to describe a male-to-female transsexual person. This is not the same as a cross-dresser, or transvestite person, nor is it the same as sexual orientation. Although it is often associated with medical treatment, this is not a requirement to be protected by the law.

For clarity in this document and in the supporting Policy BADMINTON England use transsexual man / male and transsexual woman / female; however, in general, BADMINTON England would expect everyone in badminton to use man / male or woman / female to describe people who have transitioned permanently.

Affirmed gender

We use the term 'affirmed gender' to describe the gender that the person has transitioned to as opposed to that which is assigned at birth – their 'birth gender'.

So, someone has presented themselves at your club and tells you they are transsexual?

Take on board these tips, please be mindful that for many transsexual people they may have been on a considerable social and emotional journey even to reach your club and we don't want to put them off at the first hurdle:

You must therefore:

- Welcome the player just as you would any other new attendee or member.
- Treat the individual with dignity and respect.
- Respect the private and confidential nature of the individual's situation.
- Take your lead from the person attending your session, ask their name and use it!
- Ask them what they wish to do about changing facilities – see additional guidance below.

- Encourage the individual to feedback any inappropriate language or behaviour from other members or spectators so that it can be dealt with.
- Agree with them how and what information is to be shared with others **if** this is absolutely necessary.

Areas to avoid

- Please don't make assumptions about the player, either in terms of their sexual orientation or their medical background, take your lead from the information they may or may not offer you.
- Don't go straight down the Rules and Regulations route! BADMINTON England does have a policy and procedures for those wishing to use it, however for the vast majority of transsexual people who simply wish to play in a friendly non competitive environment (such as No Strings) the Policy does not need to be used. Please don't put extra barriers to participation in the way.
- Don't be uncomfortable or awkward in the language you use, the transsexual player should be referred to as the gender that they tell you are, ie use 'he' or 'she' as you would with anyone else.

Guidance for local badminton organisations

An unfair advantage?

BADMINTON England recognises that people may have concerns about an unfair advantage especially with regards to transsexual women (men who have transitioned to become women) however the following should help allay any concerns.

Transsexual women players have told us that the hormones they take have a huge impact in terms of them losing muscle mass and strength. In addition any surgery will clearly affect the balance of the body, and any increase in weight and change to body shape can affect movement and posture amongst other areas. It is also of note that in many cases transsexual women players have less testosterone in their bodies than a person born female.

A transsexual man or boy (ie female to male) is permitted to participate fully, i.e. train, play in friendly matches or play in badminton competitions, as male. Verification of their gender should be no more than is expected of any other male player.

Transsexual females (ie male to female) may participate in training, friendly games or informal play and it would not be necessary for anyone to know anything about a person's affirmed gender. It is only if a transsexual female wishes to compete in badminton competitions where winning or losing has a meaningful outcome might it be necessary to ensure that there is no unfair advantage over opposing players. At this point the BADMINTON England Policy and Procedures should be followed and the Ethics & Compliance Manager contacted. See additional notes below.

The use of changing / toilet facilities

The use of changing and toilet facilities prior, to and during gender reassignment where the individual may present an ambiguous appearance and be highly self-conscious represents a difficult issue. Many transsexual people prefer to refrain from using communal sports facilities during this time, particularly facilities where privacy is likely to be an issue. In addition there may be transsexual people who do not undergo gender reassignment surgery and will continue to present with secondary sex characteristics in their former gender.

If there are any complaints from other users they must be handled carefully. It may be that other users find it uncomfortable to share facilities with transsexual people but it is the duty of club officials to ensure that confidentiality is not compromised and that members are not subjected to abuse, whether physical or verbal, on any ground. However other users' or members' discomfort must not be ignored and they too should be treated with dignity, should

their discomfort continue they may arrive ready changed for their badminton activity. The provision of good quality facilities, an open and welcoming atmosphere and training for members may help alleviate such discomfort.

For transsexual players who wish to play competitively:

BADMINTON England has a Policy and Procedures for people who wish to go through a more formal route to be recognised in their affirmed gender.

The Policy contains the following information:

- Why a policy is needed.
- Who and what is covered by the policy.
- Definitions with regards to transsexual people.
- BADMINTON England's procedure to determine eligibility of transsexual people to play their affirmed gender.
- Guidance for transsexual people and for local badminton organisations.

A final word

Finally, remember what a great sport badminton is and that we all have a right to play and enjoy it, here are some quotes from some transsexual players:

Delia: I love badminton and enjoy playing weekly at my local centre as part of the 'No Strings' sessions. Everyone has always been very welcoming and supportive of me playing and I have no shortage of doubles partners to play with.

Nicole: I just want to say my thank you to BADMINTON England for allowing me to play in the ladies. I had my first tournament last week and I enjoyed it a lot, it was my dream to play.

For all queries in relation to the Transsexual Policy and Procedures or the information in this document please contact:

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For further reading please see:

- [Pride Sports](#) - Committed to supporting LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender) sports clubs and working towards equity for LGBT people in sport at all levels
- [LGBT Consortium](#) - National membership organisation for LGBT groups and charities.
- [Press for Change](#) - Organisation that campaigns and provides legal support for trans people in the UK.
- [Gires](#) - information for trans people, their families and the professionals who care for them.

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