

Guidance for badminton clubs & associations on welcoming transgender 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 transgender people who currently play or may wish to play our sport.

Firstly, here are some key terms:

Transgender person

This term refers to someone with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. We use the term transgender man to describe a female-to-male transgender person and transgender woman to describe a male-to-female transgender person. This is not the same as a cross-dresser, or transvestite people, 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 transgender man / male and transgender 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

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.

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 transgender?

Take on board these tips, please be mindful that many transgender people will 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.
- Do not 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 transgender people who simply wish to play locally, the Policy does not need to be used. Please do not put extra barriers to participation in the way.
- Do not be uncomfortable or awkward in the language you use, all players should be referred to as the gender that they tell you they 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 transgender women (men who have transitioned to become women) however the following should help allay any concerns.

Transgender 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 that they may have had will clearly affect the balance of the body, and any increase in weight and change to body shape may also affect their movement and posture. It is also of note that in many cases transgender women players have less testosterone in their bodies than a person who was born female.

A transgender 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.

Transgender females (ie male to female) may also participate fully as noted above. The only exception to this is if a player may be playing under BWF sanctioned events, ie eligible for selection at a national level which may lead onto Olympic qualification. At this point the Badminton England Policy and Procedures should be followed and the Ethics & Compliance Manager contacted.

The use of changing / toilet facilities

The use of changing and toilet facilities where the individual may present an ambiguous appearance and be highly self-conscious represents a difficult issue. In addition there may be

transgender people who do not undergo gender reassignment surgery and will continue to present with secondary sex characteristics in their former gender.

Many transgender people prefer to refrain from using communal sports facilities, particularly facilities where privacy is likely to be an issue.

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 transgender 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. The provision of good quality facilities, an open and welcoming atmosphere and training for members may help alleviate such discomfort.

For transgender players who wish to play at 'national' level:

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.

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 transgender 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 Transgender 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
- [Gires](#) - information for transgender people, their families and the professionals who care for them.
- [Sport England](#) transgender inclusion in grass roots sport guidance.
- [Gendered Intelligence](#) Trans inclusion in Sport project