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Guidance for Transgender and Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Sport Ireland is the statutory authority tasked with leading, advocating and providing directed investment for the development of sport in Ireland. Working closely with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Sport Ireland supports the delivery of the National Sports Policy 2018 - 2027¹.

In addition to supporting the delivery of the National Sports Policy, Sport Ireland supports the delivery of a number of Whole of Government Strategies and Policies through assigned actions.

Sport Ireland provides direct, regular, financial support for 100 sports organisations including 61 NGBs, 10 other funded bodies and 29 LSPs. It is committed to working in partnership with them and for them, supporting capability and capacity building.

During the past decade the inclusion and eligibility of transgender and non-binary people within sport has become an important issue for sports organisations around the world and is attracting increasing scrutiny at a societal level.

It is in the context of delivering on its commitment to contribute to the delivery of National Policies and Strategies, and supporting the sport sector that Sport Ireland commenced a process to develop guidance for the sport sector in the area of transgender and non-binary inclusion in sport.

INDEPENDENCE

Sport Ireland recognises the autonomy and independence of National Governing Bodies of Sport to set eligibility and competition rules for their sport, and also acknowledges the role International Federations play in this regard.

In publishing this guidance, Sport Ireland seeks to provide the sport sector with information and insights to support decision-making and policy development in the area of transgender and non-binary inclusion in their sport, should they wish to avail of it.

DISCLAIMER

Sport Ireland is making available this guidance document to support organisations.

For the avoidance of doubt, the final decision on the nature, type, extent and format of policies, procedures and processes is a matter for each organisation.

This document is not, nor is it intended to be, a definitive statement of the law and it does not constitute legal advice. This document is not a substitute for professional advice from an appropriately qualified source and it is recommended that sport organisations consult their governing document or obtain their own independent legal advice where necessary.

While Sport Ireland has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this guidance document, Sport Ireland does not accept any responsibility or liability for any errors, inaccuracies or omissions in this document.

¹ [National Sports Policy 2018-2027](#)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Throughout this document we will use a number of terms and acronyms related to this subject. For clarity the definitions of some of the terms used are set out here and align with the definitions in the Government's previously published LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, where available.

Sport Ireland acknowledges that language is ever evolving and changing and is personal to many people. Sport Ireland has developed a general inclusive language guide which will be updated on a regular basis, and which can be found in the Diversity and Inclusion section of our website: <https://www.sportireland.ie/transgenderguidance>

Gender identity

Someone's internal perception of their gender – how they feel inside about their gender.

Non-binary

Gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine.

Transgender

An umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

Trans

A commonly used shorthand version of transgender.

Transitioning

The process of transitioning from one sex or gender to another. This can be done by dressing in different clothes, changing the way you talk, using make up, changing your hair, changing your name, taking hormones, or surgery. Transitioning does not always involve all of these steps and is ultimately up to how an individual feels about it themselves.

Transgender man

A person who was assigned a female sex at birth, who now identifies as a man.

Transgender woman

A person who was assigned a male sex at birth, who now identifies as a woman.

LGBTI+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, the plus represents the broader spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identity.²

Sex

Sex refers to the anatomical and physiological body type determined by chromosomes and effected by reproductive hormones throughout life. Male or female sex is assigned at birth in respect of observed external genitalia.

² All terms to this point can be found in the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy <https://assets.gov.ie/24459/9355b474de34447cb9a55261542a39cf.pdf>

Sport

When referring to sport we mean “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation aimed at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels”. It includes both recreational sport and competitive sport:

- Recreational sport - all forms of physical activity which, through casual or regular participation aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing and/or forming social relationships.
- Competitive sport - all forms of physical activity which, through organised participation, aim at improving physical fitness and/or obtaining improved results in competition at all levels.

IF

International Federations are international governing organisations which are responsible for administering one or more sports.

Inclusion

Means valuing people’s differences. Inclusion is pro-active behaviours, options and actions to make people feel welcome, respected and that they belong.

NGB

National Governing Bodies are organisations recognised by Sport Ireland, that coordinates the development of a particular sport or sports through constituent clubs.

LSP

Local Sports Partnerships are an initiative of Sport Ireland and aim to co-ordinate and promote the development of sport at local level. The key aims of the LSPs are to increase participation in sport, and to ensure that local resources are used to best effect.

CONSULTATION

During 2023 Sport Ireland commissioned a wide-ranging consultation and has heard the different viewpoints, and understand the concerns, of people in sport and the wider community in Ireland. This includes the LGBTI+ community as well as women's groups, faith groups and people from different ethnicities, and those for whom sport plays a fundamental and important role in their life. Input from people within sport and the broader community in Ireland was obtained through surveys, one-to-one interviews and focus groups.

In all, several thousand people interacted with this process, both directly and indirectly, and we have a good understanding of the issues we face in helping sports navigate this complex environment.

The results showed us that there are very differing opinions about how best to include everyone in sport. While many from the LGBTI+ community, transgender and non-binary people and their families, are supportive of inclusion through self-identification, this view is not shared by the vast majority of people working and taking part in sport who favoured protection of a female category (as assigned at birth). Across all groups there was modest support for entry into the female category through requirement such as testosterone suppression. When the general public was surveyed through the Irish Sports Monitor, results were more spread, with some support for inclusion, but more so for categorisation based on sex assigned at birth.

We heard suggestions for how to be inclusive through opportunities in some sports by modification of rules or scoring systems so that sport can be offered with a mixed sex or gender category. There was also support for new or different ways to develop sport whereby personal achievement may be more important than competitive outcomes. Modified team competition can give the benefits of social well-being that sports bring, while not compromising safety. However, those from the sporting community were of the opinion that fairness and safety in sport should not be compromised through inclusion practices.

CONTEXT

Everyone has a place in sport and physical activity. Sport Ireland's vision as expressed in its Statement of Strategy³ is: *An active Ireland where everyone can enjoy the lifelong benefits of sport and physical activity.*

Sports are generally divided into categories for men and women, boys and girls. Historically this has been both for social reasons and also for fairness and safety in competition. Men generally outperform women in most sports in which the outcome is affected by physical size, strength, speed or endurance. This difference can be measured in those sports which record objective outcomes, such as the race times in swimming or running, as well as jumping, lifting or throwing.

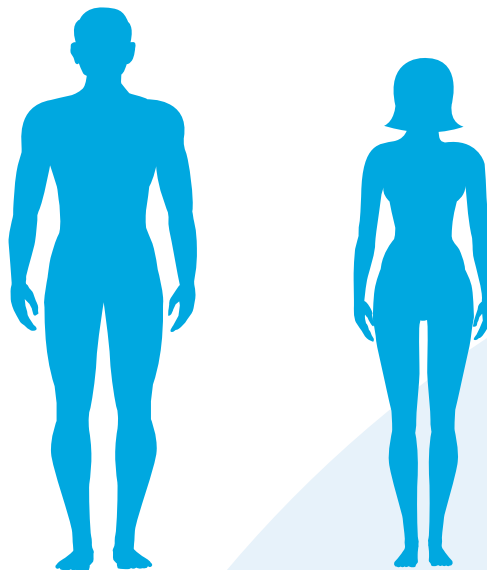
The differences in sporting performance are considered to be a reflection of the different genetics and hormonal profile of males and females, and in particular the different physical characteristics that result from a male or female puberty.

Developmental differences correlate with significantly different sporting achievement between the two sexes

10% - 12%
difference for most
swimming and
running events

~ 20%
in jumping events

30% - 50%
difference in
weightlifting ability



The male muscular advantage is predominately in the shoulder girdle and this affects performance in complex upper body actions such as performing a hockey flick or a punch

Through training and experience everyone can improve their sporting performance. However, at every level of competition and at all ages, on average, males outperform females. Those whose gender identity does not match their sex at birth, may have physical characteristics which more resemble those of their birth sex rather than their gender identity, and this can be true even after surgical or medically affirming health care. Transition can include testosterone suppression for transgender women, and testosterone supplementation for transgender men (or in some cases non-binary people assigned female at birth).

³ [Sport Ireland Strategy 2023 - 2027](#)

Currently, the scientific evidence points to retention of some of the physical determinants of sports performance after transition, and these may last for several years after therapy begins. On average, transgender women retain the majority of muscle size and strength, as well as physical stature, after transition. Transgender men may achieve male levels of muscle size, but not stature, within a couple of years of testosterone supplementation. While research to date has generally been carried out in healthcare settings to monitor the outcomes of transition on untrained adults, there is no reason to consider that the physical and physiological effects of transition would be demonstrably different in trained athletes, except that muscle mass is likely to be greater in this population.

While there is a wide range of abilities across the population, males generally outperform females in sport; physical differences are likely to persist in those who transition, whereby transgender women may retain a performance advantage.

Finding the best place for everyone can be complex because not everyone agrees on how to define categories in sport, particularly those based on the existing male/female binary. In the past it has been generally accepted that the male/female divide in sport is valid due to the different body types of the two sexes. Society is now moving toward an understanding of gender, which may not be based on physical characteristics.

Sport is for everyone. This guidance is about how to include all – while making sure we understand everyone's needs.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY LANDSCAPE

Policy for inclusion into male and female categories has changed repeatedly over the past 25 years. Genetic testing for the female category was stopped by the International Olympic Committee at the end of the Twentieth Century. Since then, transgender inclusion was first based on surgical transition, and then by hormonal (testosterone) suppression for transgender women. More recently the IOC has suggested policy based on non-discrimination and indicated that individual sports should develop their own policy. There is now a divergence of guidance and policy across different sports. (Several sports are currently reviewing their policy and so this information is subject to change)

Here are some links to current and historical policy for information.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list and is intended for information purposes. This information is correct at the time of drafting but it is important to recognise that it may change in the future.

IOC Statement:

[2003 International Olympic Committee Statement](#)

[2011 International Olympic Committee Statement](#)

[2015 International Olympic Committee Consensus Meeting](#)

[2021 International Olympic Committee Statement](#)

Some sports have retained policies based on testosterone suppression

[LPGA \(Golf\) - Testosterone level below 10nmol/L and include surgical transition](#)

[World Triathlon - Testosterone level below 2.5nmol/L for 24 months prior to competition](#)

[World Rowing - Testosterone level below 2.5nmol/L for 24 months prior to competition](#)

Some sports also include a panel or risk assessment of the individual, following testosterone suppression. This is the policy recently adopted by the LGFA in Ireland.

[LGFA \(Gaelic Football\) - Transgender Policy](#)

In recent years several sports have issued policies based on female/male categories based on birth sex, or a female category alongside an open category. In some sports, transgender and non-binary inclusion into the female category may be dependent on the absence of male puberty for transgender women.

[World Rugby - Transgender Guidelines](#)

[World Aquatics - Gender Eligibility Policy](#)

[World Athletics Transgender Eligibility Rules \(C3.5\)](#)

[Union Cycliste Internationale - Transgender Eligibility Regulations](#)

Some International Federations allow self-identification into the category of someone's self-affirmed gender:

[World Croquet](#)

In some countries, some sports have policies for domestic competition which contradict those of their IF for example:

[World Rowing](#) and [British Rowing](#)

[World Triathlon](#) and [British Triathlon](#)

[World Rugby](#) and [Rugby Canada](#)

While others are concordant with the IF, for example:

[World Rugby](#) and [IRFU](#)

[UCI](#) and [Cycling Ireland](#)

Policy for inclusion of transgender people is not settled at this time and varies between different international sports federations. In some countries, local NGBs have policies for domestic competition which are different to their IF.

THE LAW

****As referenced at the start of this document, this document does not constitute legal advice. Any organisation seeking to develop policy in this area is encouraged to seek its own legal advice.****

Ireland has a number of laws which may be of relevance to the matter of transgender inclusion in sport. Some examples of relevant legislation include, but is not limited to:

The Gender Recognition Act 2015 is “An Act to recognise change of gender; to provide for gender recognition certificates”.⁴ It provides for the recognition of an individual’s change of gender.

Rename link to Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2018⁵ (‘the Acts’) generally prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education, subject to certain exceptions. The nine grounds of discrimination are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission website contains information on the Acts, including relevant exceptions which can apply to sporting events. More information is available at this [link](#).

CULTURE OF INCLUSION

As part of the consultation commissioned by Sport Ireland in 2023, consultants spoke to gender diverse people, their families and advocates, and heard their views about the importance of inclusion and finding a space for themselves in sport. This is as much about the culture within sport as it is about the practicalities of policy and rules. Examples were shared about good practice but also poor experiences. There was information shared about encouraging developments in some sports, and by some individuals, but also the intransigence of those who do not yet understand the rationale of how to create inclusive environments. Sport, and those within the structure of sport, play an important role in how our community develops and meets the challenges of a more diverse society.

Furthermore, the consultants heard from many of those in sport who are concerned regarding the potential implications for fairness and safety when inclusion is based on self-affirmed gender rather than sex-based categories: A significant proportion considered that participation of some groups may be affected, particularly in female sport, if gender diversity is prioritised. All of these factors need to be considered when developing policy in your sport.

Sport Ireland encourages everyone to develop practices of inclusion and acceptance, however that is achieved and in whatever competitive format you choose.

The Sport Ireland Policy on Diversity and Inclusion states that “By enacting this policy, we hope to see more people from diverse communities participating and engaging in lifelong sport and physical activity and reaching their full potential, whatever that might be.”

Sport Ireland encourages organisations to approach their work in this area from an inclusive ethos. This means that when considering developing policy, organisations should examine how, not if, their sport can be inclusive of transgender and non-binary participants.

⁴ [Gender Recognition Act 2015](#)

⁵ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/enacted/en/html>

SECTION 2: DECISION-MAKING

This section seeks to provide organisations with information and insights to consider in developing policy for their sport in this area. This is intended as a support only and is not prescriptive. Not all of the options and actions outlined below will be relevant to every sport. Organisations are encouraged to review this section and to tailor as necessary, to meet the needs of their sport.

Anti-Doping: All organisations and individuals must comply with anti-doping regulations. Any references in this document to people taking part in categories are made in consideration and compliance with anti-doping regulations.

ACTIONS

This section outlines a step by step process an organisation could take to support the development of policy in this area. This is not an exhaustive list and organisations may consider it necessary to do some or all of the actions outlined below. Organisations may also identify additional actions to undertake.

Consideration should be given to what stage your organisation is at in relation to policy development as this may impact how you approach this document. The following questions may be useful to help each organisation determine their stage of development.

- *Does your organisation already have a policy and are you looking to review and update it?*
- *Does your organisation have a policy in place and no current plans to review and update it?*
- *Is your organisation in the process of developing policy?*
- *Is your organisation at the very beginning of developing its first policy?*

How you utilise this guidance document may differ depending on your response to the above questions. Some organisations may wish to dedicate time and resources to undertaking each step outlined to support developing a new policy. Others may wish to use the document as a reference point to support the implementation of existing policy, while others might use it for information purposes only.

Step 1: DEVELOP A TASK GROUP TO ESTABLISH YOUR POLICY

Your task group should include some or all of the following:

- Member(s) of senior management or board
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) lead (or equivalent), or relevant representatives from the NGB
- Sport Officials – coaches, judges, referees, etc
- Sports development officer (or equivalent)
- Those with relevant scientific and medical expertise

Step 2: AGREE FUNCTIONS OF THE TASK GROUP & TIMELINES

The task group should make a plan and set a timeline to undertake a set of actions with a view to agreeing on a proposed policy approach to transgender and non-binary inclusion in your sport.

Step 3: CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration should be given to the following areas:

1. International Policy review

Does your IF have a policy in this area? If yes, it is important to become familiar with it and if possible, seek guidance and support from your IF as you work through this process.

What other policies are in place internationally and how do they relate to your sport? There are some examples contained on pages 9 and 10 of this document. However, in order to ensure that the Task Group is satisfied that it has a good understanding of a broad range of existing international and domestic policy, further research as applicable to the sport in question should be undertaken.

2. Fact-finding

a. Sports science and performance analysis of your sport

In order to make decisions about policy regarding gender inclusion it may be helpful to think about the different factors inherent in any given sport. Sports will vary as to how much physical differences influence competitive outcomes. In this way, those sports which favour strength, speed, size and explosive power are more likely to favour competitors who have experienced male physical development. Other sports are more technique based but physical size may have an impact on competitive outcomes. Some sports are already gender neutral where outcomes are not determined solely by the physical nature of the competitor, and this applies to equestrian or motor sports, for example.

Contact, collision and combat sports add a different dimension to the assessment of inclusion due to risk of injury and the physical nature of close competition. There is no research specific to injury incidence in relation to gender inclusion, but guidance from the IOC, as well as policy in some sports acknowledges potential risk.

This can be both for transgender men, transgender women and non-binary people, for example:

World Rugby, which sets rules for the international games, requires “Confirmation of physical ability” of transgender men prior to inclusion into men’s rugby while transgender women are ineligible in women’s rugby.

The LGFA has a protocol for individual assessment should there be “Unacceptable Risk” on inclusion of transgender women.

The diagram below shows some examples of the broad range of sports - from those performed "in parallel", to contact, collision and combat sports.



b. Consider what others are doing in similar sports and in your sport in other jurisdictions

In addition to considering if your IF has a policy, organisations may also wish to seek out any policies that are in place in their sport in other jurisdictions as some of the content may be relevant.

Furthermore, consideration could be given to what policies similar sports have in place either in your jurisdiction or elsewhere.

3. Analysis of your sport

You should analyse and understand all the information and how it relates to your sport.

a. Values of your sport

Consider how the notions of fairness, safety and inclusion are valued in your sport. Are there any other values you need to consider?

b. Competition formats

How is your sport structured and how may it need to be restructured to support the implementation of your policy?

- ▶ Many sports have already developed ways in which inclusion can be achieved. For some, modifications of existing formats such as mixed competition already exists. While currently there may be limitations on the gender mix within a team sport, it may be possible to develop formats in which this is not required. Sports may wish to consider the modification of their rules of play or scoring systems to create a more inclusive model of their sport. Some sports offer fully inclusive models: Rounders, ultimate frisbee, Quadball.

- ▶ Non-binary participants: Sport is most often based on male/female categories and so it is important to understand and accommodate the needs of those who may not identify within this binary. Those who are gender fluid or non-binary are usually encouraged to choose the category which most aligns with their identity. Alternatively, some sports may be able to provide sex- or gender-neutral participation.
- ▶ Age considerations; Many sports allow mixed gender competition before the age of 12, although measurable performance differences exist between the sexes at all ages. There may be important sociological reasons to provide separate gendered sport for children. Thereafter, greater physical divergence is evident in line with onset of male puberty, and most sports consider the requirements of fairness and safety necessitate separate sex categories above the age of 11. By the age of 14 the competitive outcomes of male athletes compared with females may reach adult range, with some 14-year-old boys surpassing adult female world records.

c. Levels of sport

Sport can be both recreational or competitive. It is important to consider the 'purpose' of an event or activity: Is this event primarily for social cohesion and physical and mental wellbeing or does the outcome of the competition form the priority for participants? While some sports have defined different policy at elite and recreational sport, others maintain consistent policy regardless of the level of sport. This may be particularly important in team sports where lower skill level can increase injury risk in community based sport.



POINT OF INFORMATION

General activity is extremely important to physical and mental wellbeing. While Sport Ireland encourages physical activity this is more in line with the remit of the Education and Health Departments. There should be no barriers to physical activity, although everyone should be able to find the format in which they are most comfortable.

4. Consultation across your sport and community.

It is very important to consult with your membership regarding their needs and understanding in this area. Ideally this should be done independently, or with outside advice. By undertaking the consultation independently, it will provide members with a space to share their views anonymously. Furthermore, as this is a subject matter which might be outside the expertise of your organisation, support from external experts may be useful in helping an organisation navigate the consultation process, including the design of survey questions etc.

You should factor the views and needs of your members and stakeholders throughout this process. This will include the LGBTI+ community, as well as women's sports groups, disability/para athlete groups etc. There should be an understanding that communication will be offered to your membership explaining your process and detailing how and why decisions have been made.

5. New opportunities for inclusion

Consider first the opportunities to provide inclusion in your sport, and this should relate to all groups and communities within Ireland. Inclusion might be achieved within the main competitive model of your sport, but it can also be developed through modification of existing formats, or even by creating new versions of your sport. When you develop a format for categorisation it is important to consider that there is a place for everyone, and that those of either sex or any gender will have a place within the framework of your competition. Be clear as to how each and every person will be accommodated in your sport.

In respect of transgender and non-binary people it is important to understand what your sport can offer, both from a participation model, as well as competitive opportunities.

There may be people within your sport, other sporting organisations, Sport Ireland and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) personnel, who can offer input into aspects of inclusion across your sport, and how this can link in with other ways to create opportunities for everyone in sport.

Step 4: REFLECTIONS

What does all this mean for your sport?

What are the values which underpin your sport, and drive the culture within? This process will ultimately bring you to make decisions based on these priorities.

Everyone wants their own sport to grow and thrive, and this can be by being inclusive and offering a place for everyone. Being inclusive may mean different things in different sports. You are encouraged to think about inclusion in the whole – for all the groups across the community in Ireland. It is important to consider whether inclusion may impact on the experience of others, and how this might be optimised for everyone. This includes consideration of fairness, and if relevant safety in your sport, and the value this holds to your membership.

DECISION MAKING

It is important that organisations invest time and resources to ensure that their decision making process is a robust one, which you can implement and communicate to your members.

Taking the time to work through the actions and considerations outlined above, and to identify any additional considerations, will help you to come to an informed decision for your sport.

The next step for an organisation is to take all the learnings from the process, and to decide what policy approach it will take.

The current landscape suggests that main policy options for transgender inclusion are:

- 1 Self-identification based on gender (womens, mens, (or girls and boys) and some sports can offer other gender/ non/binary).
- 2 Gender categories with entry requirements (usually testosterone suppression into the female category for trans and non-binary people).
- 3 Sex based categories in relation to birth sex; (female/ male or female/open)*. An open category is one in which all participants are eligible irrespective of sex or gender identity.

Some sports have policy which reflects the understanding that there are (usually) two categories based on sex – either male or female, and this is supplemented with a specific transgender or gender inclusion policy.

Even in the gender based, or sex-based categories, sports should make sure there is a place for everyone as long as they are comfortable to do so. Gender based categories, with or without entry requirements, allow eligibility consistent with an individual's gender identity, or into the category which most aligns with their gender. In this way a transgender woman will be eligible for the women's category, a transgender man into the men's category, and non-binary people into the category of their choosing. However, there are also options for trans people to participate in sex based categories. There have already been examples of transgender women competing successfully in male sport, and transgender men competing in female sport, and non-binary people in the category of their birth. These are entirely within the rules of sport as long as anti-doping regulations are met. It is important that sport encourages inclusion through sex-based categories, irrespective of gender identity so that trans and non-binary people can be accepted and made comfortable in these circumstances.

Once you have determined which format(s) of competition you will be supporting in your sport, whether that be a single model or multiple options, your policy should reflect the aims, processes and outcomes you seek.

* Sex-based categories, as defined by some international federations, may include those who have not undergone a male puberty within the female category. As this requires medical intervention in under-age children, caution should be used in such policy development and expert medical advice sought.



POINT OF INFORMATION

For policy guidance in relation to Differences of Sex Development, organisations may wish to consult with and seek guidance from their IF.



POINT OF INFORMATION

Female and Open Category

Some sports may opt for a Female Category alongside an Open Category. The Female Category is reserved for those assigned female at birth, while the Open Category is available to all competitors irrespective of their sex or gender. Should this be the option you choose for your sport, it is important to consider how the Open Category can be made welcoming and inclusive for all potential participants.

Trans specific categories

At this time separate categories for transgender competitors may not be considered appropriate, nor welcomed by the majority of trans people. Some sports have offered a Non-binary Category which has been utilised by some non-binary competitors. However, issues have been identified in relation to the differences in those who are assigned male at birth, compared with those who are female at birth.

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once you have determined what your policy approach will be, there will be practical considerations regarding how to implement your policy, in order to ensure that those entrusted with the practical logistics have the resources needed to fulfil their role.

It is important that in addition to deciding on a policy approach you also look at factors related to implementation and what that might mean for your current processes and for your membership. These considerations will vary from sport to sport but some examples of areas you may wish to give further consideration to are:

1. REGISTRATION FORMS

Your organisation's registration should reflect the category decision you have made. In order to ensure your approach is consistently applied and minimises confusion for your members, organisations should consider how the questions you ask on your registration form comply with the terminology used in your policy.

If instituting the policy option 1 OR 2 listed above, ***"Self-identification based on gender" or "Gender categories with entry requirements"*** consider the following:

Gender based categories allow entry based on someone's self-affirmed identity. Self-identification does not require any form of medical or surgical intervention, and can occur at any stage of life. In this instance registration forms should reflect an individual's own perception of identity. Organisations should consider offering both a mens' and a womens' option (or boys and girls depending on the age) which reflect the participation categories to which you will offer entry.

Most sports will continue to offer only categories within the remit of mens' and womens' competition, in which case not all genders, including non-binary people, will be included. Unless it is practical for you to offer alternative gender categories it is usual practice that participants are offered to choose the category which best reflects their identity. Some individual sports, particularly at mass participation events, now offer a non-binary category.

If instituting the policy option 3 listed above, ***"Sex based categories in relation to birth sex"*** consider the following:

Organisations may consider offering a male and female option. Alternatively, depending on the approach you take, offering a female category based on birth sex, alongside an open category. Female category may be defined as those who were assigned female at birth, the Male category defined as those assigned male at birth, and the Open category eligible for all participants.

POINT OF INFORMATION

Anti-doping

It is important to acknowledge and observe anti-doping regulations within your policy. Some medications, including some testosterone suppressing medication as well as some 'puberty blockers' are prohibited by World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) rules. Use of such medications as part of a medical transition will require a 'Therapeutic Use Exemption' (TUE) for competitive sport. A TUE is gained from a sports physician or medical practitioner who can administer the anti-doping rules of WADA.

Testosterone (and related anabolic agents), whether taken by mouth, injection or through a gel, is on the WADA banned list and is generally not allowed to be used by competitive athletes. Transgender men and non-binary people assigned female at birth who are using or intend to use testosterone as part of gender affirming care will need to gain a TUE before entering the male or open category. Use of testosterone, at any time, will mean an athlete is not eligible for the female category.

2. INCLUSION THROUGH ENTRY REQUIREMENT

Sports which choose to offer inclusion through some form of entry requirement (such as testosterone suppression in the women's category, or a case-by-case panel assessment) should research other sports which have similar policies. There may be some aspects of policy approaches from other organisations which could be relevant or applicable to your sport. These can be used as a reference or information point but should not be automatically copied without giving consideration to the specific needs of your sport. If you wish to implement entry requirements ensure that you know all the practicalities of how this needs to be done before launching the policy.

Some things to consider are;

- What blood level of testosterone will you stipulate for a transgender woman to be able to compete in the women's category?
- What time period will you stipulate hormone suppression is required prior to eligibility for competition?
- How will you be able to monitor that required blood levels are maintained at all times before eligibility (ie for the time prior to competition), and for the ongoing period of competitive sport (both during the competitive season and the off-season)?
- Blood tests for hormone levels require analysis by liquid chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (not the standard blood testing procedure)

Case by case analysis, or risk assessment, for entry of transgender or non-binary people into sex-based categories requires careful consideration. It is important to understand the subjectivity of such procedures and appreciate that there will be some who do not meet assessment requirements. Organisations should give consideration to what supports will be provided to any individuals who are excluded from a particular category through these processes.

3. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Organisations will need to review their existing complaints and appeals procedures to determine what changes if any are required.

Do your procedures as they are currently written allow for complaints and appeals to this policy?

4. EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

It will be important to ensure that relevant staff, volunteers and members are appropriately trained so that they understand the processes involved with the policy.

You should identify who might need specific training beyond the general information you will provide to your members.

Do those involved in handling complaints for example, need additional complaints training?

Are there any groups involved in officiating your sport who might require additional support?

5. COMMUNICATION

Communication of the policy and plans for implementation will be very important. If your organisation has consulted with membership as outlined earlier in this document, there will be an awareness of plans to produce a policy.

Organisations should consider and plan for how you will communicate and share details of the policy with your members.

Are there any particular groups who will require direct contact?

Are there particular groups who will require a more detailed briefing about the policy and plans for implementation?

Who will members reach out to if they have questions or concerns?

ONGOING REVIEW

Given the constantly evolving nature of this subject matter, it is important for organisations to commit and put a plan in place to review their policy at regular intervals or as the need arises.

SECTION 4: SUPPORTS

Sport Ireland understands that organisations will require additional and ongoing support as they seek to develop policy in this area.

A suite of additional resources which will be regularly updated are available at the following link:
<https://www.sportireland.ie/transgenderguidance>

These will include:

- An FAQ document
- A reference document
- An inclusive language guide
- Information regarding additional training and workshops for relevant organisations.





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