

LTA TRANSGENDER AND
NON-BINARY INDIVIDUALS POLICY:
**GUIDANCE FOR LTA
LICENSED OFFICIALS
AND COMPETITION
ORGANISERS**

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SUMMARY

This guidance has been written to support you in making informed decisions about how to implement the LTA's Transgender and Non-Binary Individuals Policy in your role running competitions. This summary provides only very basic headline information and so you must read the Policy, and this guidance document, in full if you are responsible for making decisions for your venue in relation to its implementation.

Why are we changing the Policy?

We have a dual responsibility: to preserve the integrity and fairness of competitive tennis, and to ensure that tennis remains as inclusive and welcoming as possible for everyone. Tennis is a gender-affected sport – the average man has a physical performance advantage when playing against the average woman. The majority of currently available research says that some of this advantage is retained in transgender women or non-binary individuals of male sex at birth, making competition potentially unfair for biological women. We also need to be aware of, and compliant with, legal developments including the Equality and Human Rights Commission's ("EHRC") recent **Code of Practice**, which states that sex categorisation in competitive sport should be on the basis of biological sex.

What are we doing?

In line with the requirements of the EHRC's Code of Practice, we are amending our Policy to restrict transgender women and non-binary individuals of male sex at birth from playing in the women's category in all **Structured Competition**. Structured Competition means all organised competition which is sex-categorised and from which there is a consequence, such as progressing to a next round, determining a place in a league or ladder, or contributing to the players' ratings. This will apply to competitions ranging from National Championships through to competition structures run within venues, such as club championships. For all Structured Competition, eligibility for

each competition category in all forms of tennis and padel, and including disability competitions, and in all age groups is:

Gender	Men's Competition Category in Structured Competitions	Women's Competition Category in Structured Competitions
Transgender woman	Yes	No
Transgender man	No	Yes – provided gender-affirming hormone treatment not started
Cis-gender woman	No	Yes
Cis-gender man	Yes	No
Non-binary individual of female sex at birth	No	Yes – provided gender-affirming hormone treatment not started
Non-binary individual of male sex at birth	Yes	No

Other Play is any form of play which is not Structured Competition. In Other Play, where there is either no sex categorisation (e.g. where the competition is explicitly open for either sex to play in) or no consequence of play (e.g. a friendly game played by choice between friends), there are no restrictions on the participation of transgender men or transgender women, or non-binary individuals.

Use of changing rooms

Given each venue will be different, it is not possible for us to provide one-size-fits-all guidance. However, the EHRC's Code of Practice is clear that the starting point for venues is that single sex spaces, which include changing rooms and toilets, should be used on the basis of biological sex. Venues should consult the Code of Practice in making decisions in relation to changing room provision.

INTRODUCTION

This guidance is intended to help LTA Licensed Officials implement the [LTA Transgender and Non-Binary Individuals Policy](#) appropriately and must be read alongside the Policy. If you are a [player](#) or [LTA Registered Venue/LTA Accredited Coach](#) you can find specific guidance here.

In developing the Policy, we have worked within the legal framework of the Equality Act 2010 and the EHRC's Code of Practice on the interpretation of the Act, while balancing two potentially conflicting responsibilities as the governing body for tennis and padel. We have a responsibility to ensure competition in our sport is fair and a responsibility to ensure tennis and padel are welcoming and inclusive for everyone. The Policy seeks to ensure that tennis and padel are fully compliant with the law, while encouraging everyone in tennis and padel always to make every effort to ensure that everyone feels welcome and that they belong in our sport.

Where do officials and competition organisers start in implementing the Policy?

We know that those running competitions may have concerns about how to implement the Policy appropriately. It is therefore important that all those involved in running competitions read through and carefully consider the Policy and this guidance before making any decisions in relation to implementation, irrespective of whether you are currently aware of having any transgender or non-binary players playing in competitions which you organise.

If any element of the Policy or guidance is unclear, or if you have specific questions or concerns about how to implement it after having read both documents, please contact the LTA [here](#). We will work with you to answer your questions and support you through your approach to implementation.

Language and terminology

Language matters. The words we use can have a significant impact on those around us, and it is therefore important that we all strive to use language which is inclusive and respectful for all. We also know that sometimes it can be worrying for people who may be unsure of the right language to use and are concerned about inadvertently saying something which might negatively affect someone else. As a result, we have produced a short video around inclusive language which you can find on the Inclusion section of our website, [here](#).

As a minimum, it is important to understand the meaning of certain terms in order to apply the Policy appropriately:

- **TRANSGENDER** – this is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender identity is different from, or does not sit comfortably with, their sex at birth. “Trans” is often used simply as shorthand for Transgender.
- **TRANSITION** – every person's transition is different; it is the process which some people, whose gender identity and sex at birth do not match, go through to align their life and/or physical identity to match their gender identity. This can include different steps such as social transition (e.g. changing the name or pronouns they wish to be known by), medical transition (e.g. taking medical steps such as hormone therapy), or legal transition (e.g. changing their name, gender and/or sex on legal documents).
- **NON-BINARY INDIVIDUAL** – someone whose gender identity does not sit comfortably with ‘female’ or ‘male’. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject binary identities entirely.
- **TRANSGENDER WOMAN** – refers to an individual of male sex at birth who has a female gender identity.
- **TRANSGENDER MAN** – refers to an individual of female sex at birth who has a male gender identity.
- **CISGENDER WOMAN** – refers to an individual of female sex at birth who has a female gender identity.
- **CISGENDER MAN** – refers to an individual of male sex at birth who has a male gender identity.
- **BIOLOGICAL SEX** – refers to an individual's status as a man or a woman based on biological (in particular chromosomal, gonadal and hormonal) sex characteristics, which are dichotomous.

A more complete list of terms which you might hear used when talking about the Policy and more generally around inclusion is included at the end of this guidance.

Why have we changed our policy?

The Policy was first introduced in January 2025 and it was based upon various factors including our responsibilities as a governing body, the applicable legal framework, consultation with those affected, the available science and research and, in particular, the guidance from the Sports Councils' Equality Group to Governing Bodies. When we published it, we committed to keeping the Policy under review in the light of emerging scientific developments or regulatory changes. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has since published a new Code of Practice, addressing matters including competitive sport and use of changing facilities. This update to our Policy and accompanying Guidance reflects the content of the new Code of Practice.

Who does the policy apply to?

The Policy applies to all individuals at LTA Registered Venues or taking part in LTA Sanctioned Competition. While it contains provisions which apply specifically to transgender and non-binary players, it also places responsibility on all participants, as well as those who run LTA Registered Venues and Competitions, to help foster a fair and inclusive environment for all.

When does the Policy apply from?

The original version of the Policy has been effective since the 1st January 2025. The updated version of the Policy will come into effect on the 1st September 2026.

How does the Policy divide competition?

The Policy divides competition into two types:

Structured Competition

This is where players take part in organised competitions with sex-based categories (i.e. a men's and a women's competition which are separate) of any Grade, from National Championships down to a competition in a venue just for members, and where there is some form of consequence to winning or losing, e.g:

- progression through to the next round of a competition;
- determining the player's place in a ladder or league structure; or
- contributing towards the player's ratings.

These are competitions where there will usually be some form of independent draw, meaning, that players do not have choice over who they play against. In these competitions, the Policy places restrictions on the eligibility of transgender and non-binary individuals, in particular preventing them from competing in any category other than the one that corresponds with their biological sex.

Other Play

This is any form of play which is not Structured Competition.

This might include playing points, games or sets against friends, or a competition where there are no sex-based categories, which is based upon level of play and which is designated as 'open' to everyone.

For clarity – where LTA Local Tennis Leagues are open to both sexes, they fall into "Other Play", but where they have been set up as women only, they are "Structured Competition" and subject to the restrictions set out below.

What is the role of LTA Licensed Officials and competition organisers in relation to this Policy?

RUNNING A COMPETITION

What does “Structured Competition” include?

Simply put, any competition you are involved in with sex categories, i.e. men’s/boys’ and women’s/girls’, will be “**Structured Competition**”. This will range from our highest level competitions such as the National Championships, through the National, Regional and County Tours, County Cup, Play Your Way to Wimbledon, County and District Leagues at a local level, and down to any organised competition held within your venue, such as club championships or even a social Sunday afternoon tournament.

Your primary role is to ensure that all competitions have an inclusive culture within the parameters of the Policy and that all individuals attending are treated with dignity and respect.

For the purposes of this Policy, you need to be aware of the rules for **Structured Competition**. For competitions which are Graded 1-6, i.e. outside of a single venue context, you will not need to make decisions based on those rules or to enforce them. The LTA Competition Management System will facilitate who is eligible to compete in the competition, based upon the data we have on participants, and so you will not need to make decisions on whether or not players can compete, or in which category a player should be competing in. The same will be true if you are responsible for running a local league or team competition which is Graded 1-6.

See further below for how to raise any concerns about compliance with the Policy.

What does the Policy say about who can compete in the men’s and women’s category in Structured Competition?

The Policy sets out that a player may generally only compete in Structured Competitions in the sex category which corresponds with their biological sex. This means that transgender women or non-binary individuals of male sex at birth cannot compete in the women’s competition category, and transgender men or non-binary individuals of female sex at birth cannot compete in the men’s competition category.

Transgender men and non-binary individuals of female sex at birth may compete in the women’s category, provided they have not commenced gender-affirming hormone treatment, i.e. have not started taking testosterone. This is because there are no issues around fairness until they begin such treatment.

What do Licensed Officials and competition organisers need to think about for Other Play?

RUNNING A COMPETITION

What does “Other Play” include?

Simply put, this is everything that is not Structured Competition, either because it is a competition without sex-based competition categories (i.e. “open”) or because it is informal play where there is no consequence to the outcome, for example, where players arrange amongst themselves to play points, games or sets.

The amended Policy separates out this type of play, where either there are no sex-based competition categories (for example, where a competition has been organised on the basis of level-based play), or where it is informal play where there is no consequence to the outcome (for example where four friends arrange to play a game together). In these circumstances, there are no restrictions on transgender and non-binary players based on biological sex or gender identity – they may participate freely.

While you are less likely to be involved in Other Play, as the majority of what you do will be Structured Competition,

Other Play does include the potential for organising “open category” competitions. These could increase the opportunities for transgender and non-binary players to compete in a more inclusive way, and so you should consider whether this is an appropriate format for the competitions which you organise.

RUNNING A COMPETITION

What is an “open” category?

An open category either replaces the men’s competition category with, or introduces a third competition that is, an “open” category where everyone is allowed to enter irrespective of their sex or gender. This is more inclusive for transgender and non-binary players. It can also enable you to create explicitly level-based competition, which can have the added benefit of improving the experience for all players.

How to approach challenges and questions before, on the day of, and after a competition

When organising Structured Competition, any comments or questions about the content of the Policy or questions from somebody who believes they are eligible to compete in a category but have not been allowed to enter on the system should be directed to the LTA [here](#).

If, on the day of competition, there are any challenges to a player’s eligibility to participate in the category for which they have been allowed to enter by the system and in which they are playing, you should:

- appropriately remind the person challenging of the importance of being sensitive and inclusive of people’s differences, and of not making assumptions based upon how someone looks or presents themselves;
- inform them that all decisions in relation to eligibility to take part under the Policy are made at the point of entry, through the competition management system, and on the basis of the personal information provided to the LTA by participants – not by Licensed Officials on the day; and
- if they have reason to believe that a participant is not complying with the terms of the Policy, they must not challenge that player themselves, or make comments to other participants, they should raise the matter with the LTA [here](#). We would expect them to do so in a respectful way and with reference to evidence to support their belief. It will then be for the LTA to decide whether any further action needs to be taken. In accordance with the Policy, any information they provide to the LTA for consideration under the Policy must be accurate, complete, and not misleading; and the person must not provide any information in bad faith, to harass, stigmatise or otherwise injure another person, or for any other improper purpose.

Where, either during a competition or after it has concluded, there is evidence to suggest that a participant is in contravention of the LTA Competition Regulations as a result of not complying with the Policy, then the usual process for considering whether any potential breach of the Regulations will apply.

How can Licensed Officials communicate more inclusively?

All Licensed Officials should always seek to be as inclusive as possible to all individuals who participate or who wish to participate in a competition you are organising. Ways in which you can do this as a Licensed Official, both generally and for the transgender and non-binary communities specifically, include:

- **remember that everyone is an individual** – do not make assumptions either based upon how someone presents themselves or how they look;
- **try to avoid gendered language in communications where possible** – e.g. instead of “if a player needs to discuss the schedule *he or she* should speak to the referee” use “if a player wants to discuss the schedule *they* should speak to the referee”;
- **use the language a transgender or non-binary person uses for themselves and, if you do not know what pronouns to use, ask.** If it does not come up naturally in conversation and you are still unsure, ask politely and

respectfully, without making a big issue out of it. Sharing your own pronouns can be a useful way to clarify, e.g. “Hi, I’m Rebecca and I use she/her as my pronouns. How about you?” If you accidentally use the wrong pronouns, apologise and move on – making more of an issue over a pronoun mistake may be awkward and often draws unwanted attention to the transgender or non-binary person;

- **be careful and considerate about what other questions you ask respecting other people’s right to privacy and confidentiality.** Just because you are interested in or curious about something does not mean that it is appropriate to ask about it. Two questions it is useful to ask yourself are “Do I need to know this information to treat this person respectfully?”, e.g. asking a person’s name and pronoun is almost always appropriate; and “Would I be comfortable if this question was turned round and asked of me?”, e.g. asking questions about medical procedures or treatment undergone is unlikely to be necessary or appropriate.

Use of changing facilities and toilets at competitions

In advance of arranging a competition at a Registered Venue, you should ensure that they have an appropriate policy in place covering the use of changing facilities and toilets and that you are familiar with it. It is the Registered Venue’s responsibility to decide how best to provide appropriate changing and toilet facilities for all its members, players and visitors. What the Policy is should be included in any briefing of other officials you are working alongside (e.g. court supervisors, chair umpires, line umpires). You will need to give consideration in advance, where relevant, for how best to manage toilet/attire breaks if line umpires are to accompany players. Often the gender of the person who accompanies a player will simply be determined by availability but, where there is likely to be a choice of who will accompany them it would be good practice to ask players which gender of official they would prefer to accompany them.

APPENDIX A – USE OF LANGUAGE

As referenced above, language matters. It is useful to educate yourself, where necessary, on the following terms which might help in having inclusive conversations on this topic. Some terms are included here not because they are directly relevant to Transgender and Non-Binary people but to help differentiate for those with less understanding or lived experience of trans and non-binary people:

SEX OR BIOLOGICAL SEX

this refers to an individual's status as a man or a woman based on biological (in particular chromosomal, gonadal, and hormonal) sex characteristics, which are dichotomous. Note: intersex is a separate term and is defined below, and an individual's legal sex may not be the same as their biological sex.

GENDER IDENTITY

this refers to an individual's self-identified gender. This may be the same as or different to an individual's biological sex. Gender identity is not binary and can exist across a broad spectrum. A person may identify at any point on this spectrum or outside it entirely, including as transgender, non-binary, gender fluid or gender-neutral.

TRANSGENDER

refers to an individual whose gender identity is different from their sex at birth, whether or not they have commenced or undergone any form of medical transition. "Trans" is often used as shorthand for transgender.

NON-BINARY INDIVIDUAL

refers to individuals whose gender identity does not sit comfortably as 'male' or 'female'. Non-binary identities are varied. Some individuals identify with some aspects of binary male and/or female identities, while others reject them entirely.

TRANSGENDER WOMAN

an individual of male sex at birth who has a female gender identity.

TRANSGENDER MAN

an individual of female sex at birth who has a male gender identity.

INTERSEX

is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy which does not fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born with female typical appearance on the outside but having mostly male typical anatomy on the inside. For the purposes of the LTA Policy, biological sex is treated as dichotomous (male or female).

CIS-GENDER

a term describing an individual whose gender identity is the same as their biological sex. For example, a cisgender woman is an individual of female sex at birth who has a female gender identity, and a cisgender man is an individual of male sex at birth who has a male gender identity.

TRANSITION

every person's transition is different; it is the process that some people, whose gender identity and sex at birth do not match, go through to align their life and/or physical identity with their gender identity. This can include different steps such as social transition (e.g. changing the name or pronouns they wish to be known by), medical transition (e.g. taking medical steps such as hormone therapy), or legal transition (e.g. changing their name, gender and/or sex on legal documents).

GENDER DYSPHORIA

this describes a sense of unease or distress that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.

GENDER AFFIRMING HORMONE TREATMENT

this is hormone therapy, such as the taking of testosterone or oestrogen supplements, to help better align a person's body/physical appearance with their gender identity.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

is where a person undergoes or proposes to undergo, a process for the purposes of reassigning their sex.

GENDER RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE (GRC)

this is a legal document issued under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 that a person can apply for in order to have their acquired gender legally recognised in the UK. A GRC changes a person's legal sex for most legal purposes. Obtaining a GRC is not a requirement for participation in tennis under this Policy, which is based on biological sex rather than legal sex.

GENDER PRONOUNS / PERSONAL PRONOUNS

personal pronouns are words we use every day to refer to ourselves or others (for example, she/her, he/him, or they/them). Pronouns can be an important way for a person to express their gender identity and should be respected and used appropriately when referring to that person.

DISCRIMINATION

there are different types of discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** – this is when you are treated worse than another person or other people because: you have a protected characteristic (including sex and gender reassignment); someone thinks you have that protected characteristic; or you are connected to someone with that characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** – this happens when there is a policy which applies in the same way for everybody but which disadvantages a group of people who share a protected characteristic.

TRANSPHOBIA

this is intolerance of gender diversity or fear, dislike or prejudice against someone on the basis that they are transgender.

DEAD NAMING

this is the act of referring to a transgender person, whether intentionally or not, by the name they used prior to transitioning. This can be deeply hurtful and should be avoided.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

this is about who you are attracted to and want to have romantic or sexual relationships with. This includes gay, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual and asexual, as well as other orientations.

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