

# Policy and guidance on trans people playing tennis.

This policy has been written by the LTA Safe And Inclusive Tennis Team. It's approved by the LTA's CEO, Executive Team and Board.

*"This document is currently under review in light of proposed Sport England guidance and Equalities advice"*



# Policy on trans or transgender tennis players.

## 1. Introduction

Tennis is a sport that can be played by anyone and we are committed to ensuring that all people, whatever their background are engaged and involved in the sport; creating a safe and inclusive tennis environment that enables everyone to participate and feel welcome. There are many things that you can do to ensure you are providing a safe and inclusive environment and you can find out more in What's the Score that provides tools, tips and templates to help you achieve this.

British Tennis regulates the participation of competitors in tennis competitions as set out by the LTA rules and our intention is that someone's background should not be a barrier to participation in the sport. British Tennis has produced this policy to set out its position on participation by trans or transgender people as players and identify what you can do to welcome trans or transgender people to tennis and ensure they can participate fully in it.

We use the term trans or transgender to describe those people who, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, share the protected characteristic of gender reassignment and are described as transsexual people. We do not include intersex people, androgynous and polygender people, cross-dressing and transvestite people in these terms.

Under current English legislation, tennis, as a gender-affected sport, may be regulated by British Tennis in respect of the participation of a transsexual person. We wish to try, as far as is possible, to permit trans people to compete in their affirmed gender while balancing this with our role in providing fair play and competition and protecting the integrity of women's, men's and mixed competitions.

In addition to those wishing to compete, we also have a responsibility to protect those who may be staff, coaches, officials, volunteers or spectators, and who may be transsexual people, or perceived to be so, or associated with them, such as family members. However, this document focuses only on players, or would-be players, in tennis competitions.



## 2. Safe tennis

All venues and individuals play a vital role in keeping children and adults safe, both embedding practices that help promote people's well-being and responding to concerns if they arise. We know that both children and adults can disclose abuse and discrimination within the tennis environment, or externally – it could be in their home, school or workplace for example. However, we all have a legal and moral responsibility to report concerns; your venue Welfare Officer and the LTA Safe and Inclusive Tennis Team are great sources of support. This includes transphobic abuse where people who are trans or are perceived to be trans are victims of abuse.

## 3. Inclusive tennis

People from different backgrounds may have different needs and expectations and may experience barriers in trying to access tennis. A person's age, disability, gender reassignment status, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or faith, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic or other background should not be a barrier to enjoying the game. Inclusive venues and coaches take proactive steps that enable everyone to access tennis, have a positive experience and the opportunity to achieve their potential – trans people are no exception to this.

## 4. Key terms

We use a range of terms associated with trans people; we recognise that there are considerable differences in these and we have adopted the following terms:

**Trans or transgender** – we use the term trans or transgender to describe those people who, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, share the protected characteristic of gender reassignment and are described as transsexual people. We do not include intersex people, androgyne and polygender people, cross-dressing and transvestite people under these terms.

**Gender reassignment** – this is one of several protected characteristics defined in equality legislation (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 reassigning their sex. Although it is often



associated with medical treatment, this is not a requirement to be protected by the law.

**Transsexual person** – this describes someone with the protected characteristic (under the Equality Act 2010) 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 people, nor is it the same as sexual orientation.

**Affirmed gender** – describes the gender that the person has transitioned to as opposed to that which is assigned at birth – their ‘birth gender’.

## 5. What language to use

We would expect everyone in tennis to use the following preferred terms.

| Preferred terms   | Avoid                      |
|---|----------------------------|
| trans, trans person, transgender, transgendered person, transsexual man or woman, he, she, him, his, hers | she-he<br>he-she<br>tranny |

## 6. Trans players – male and female

As a non-contact sport, British Tennis sanctions men’s, mixed and women’s forms of the game. As such there are no safety concerns for any trans male or female wishing to take part in sanctioned tennis competitions or in training or friendly/ recreational tennis.

We recognise, however, that there may be some concerns about fairness in the women’s and mixed game. Our policy assumes that trans women (male-to-female trans person) wishing to compete in mixed or female sanctioned tennis competitions do so with the best of intentions and with no intent to deceive about their status to gain any competitive advantage. Accordingly, you should accept people in the gender they present and verification of their identity should be no more than that expected of any other player.



Should someone have a genuine reason to believe that there may be some deception to gain a competitive advantage in the mixed or women's game or that there are genuine and substantive concerns about the woman's physical strength, stamina or physique that may put other female competitors at a disadvantage, they should refer their concerns to the LTA Safe and Inclusive Tennis Team.

## **Players on the Performance Pathway**

Players on the performance pathway are there to train and challenge for a position in GB national squads. Players who have the status of gender reassignment and are in the top 500, or are seeking to represent GB in tennis or are in our defined performance pathway such as the Player Support Programme, will need to be compliant with the ITF policy. The latest ITF policy can be found on page 74 of the 2017 Pro Regulations: <http://www.itftennis.com/media/253215/253215.pdf>

We recognise that, for some people, the process of gender reassignment may start before joining the performance pathway or during it; we will work with each trans person on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they know about the implication of the international policy and are supported in their gender reassignment process.

## **7. Personal details on British Tennis Membership (BTM) system or other British Tennis database**

### **Where a trans person is new to the BTM system**

1. When a new player registers with BTM then that person would be able to register with BTM with no verification of his or her sex needed.

**Where a trans person is already a BTM member** and wishes to change their personal details, such as name or sex, on the system this will be handled slightly differently depending on whether the change has a significant impact on a player's status in competition or not.

2. Changes to the BTM database can only be instigated if a BTM contacts the BT Services Team (Phone: +44 (0) 208 487 7000 or email [info@lta.org.uk](mailto:info@lta.org.uk)) and requests the change. If the change is of a sensitive



and confidential nature e.g. a sex change, then the change request will only be handled by those who need to know, and who all understand their legal obligation regarding data protection (usually Head of IT; Competition Officer, SIT Senior Manager).

3. Where changes are requested that do not have any significant impact on a player's status in competition then these are made without any proof of the change. For example, a Change of Name – no evidence of proof is asked of people for a change of name e.g. following marriage; accordingly, a request for a change of name for a trans person can be made in the same way.
4. Where changes have a significant impact on a player's status in competition, for example changing a Date of Birth, Play County (someone's eligibility to represent a county in a team-based competition) or a Change of Sex, that change will need to be backed up by proof.

Change of sex – as this is a change that will have a significant impact on a player's status, it can only be made if there is proof of the change. In the UK, people can change their name without any legal process, however proof of a change of sex could be any of the following:

- Birth certificate, Passport or Driving Licence indicating relevant sex; a Deed Poll or a Statutory Declaration (before a solicitor or magistrate in court), or a doctor's letter may also be used.
- If none of the above are available, and, as the trans person will be known to BTM, then an alternative of a written, signed statement from the trans person to indicate that they intend to live in their acquired gender from then on can be accepted; it would help if this was endorsed by a member of the club e.g. club secretary if possible.
- Please note that some trans people will go through the process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate. This allows trans people born in the UK to automatically receive a new birth certificate and provides enhanced legal protection over the disclosure of their previous gender status. A GRC indicates that the person has already lived in the affirmed gender role, for at least two years and intends to continue doing so. It would be wholly inappropriate for anyone to request or require a person to provide a GRC as this is a breach of the person's privacy and may be harassment.

## 7. Welcoming trans people in tennis

Inclusive venues and coaches take proactive steps that enable everyone to access tennis, have a positive experience and the opportunity to achieve their potential and trans people are no exception to this.



Take on board these tips, please be mindful that for many people (particularly trans people) they may have been on a considerable social and emotional journey even to reach your venue or tennis activity and we want to ensure that their first experience is a positive one.

### **You must therefore:**

- Welcome the player just as you would any other new attendee or member
- Accept them in the gender they present; verification of their identity should be no more than expected of any other player.
- 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; this may include a change of name and title and this should be accommodated without prejudice or aggravation
- Adopt a zero-tolerance stance to transphobic language or jokes whether or not the trans person is present. Language that degrades trans people creates a hostile environment and must be stopped. Sometimes these behaviours appear trivial and are overlooked. They must not be, because if allowed to continue, they become the norm, and behaviour and language, not only towards trans people, but towards other minority groups is also likely to escalate.

### **Things 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 be uncomfortable or awkward in the language you use, the trans player should be referred to as the sex that they tell you are, i.e. use 'he' or 'she' as you would with anyone else.



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

Trans members should have access to toilets and the changing room that corresponds to their gender identity. You could provide unisex toilets as well as single changing cubicles in both the men's and women's changing areas.

Complaints from other users must be handled carefully. It may be that other users find it uncomfortable to share facilities with trans people but it is the duty of venue 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 tennis activity. The provision of good quality facilities, an open and welcoming atmosphere and training for members may help alleviate such discomfort.

## **8. My story (venue member):**

“As a trans woman, my biggest fear on joining the club was using the changing rooms. I was delighted to find they talked to me about what I needed and we were able to come up with a solution we were all happy with”.

## **9. For More Information:**

### **Equality Network**

(promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality & rights across Scotland)





[www.equality-network.org](http://www.equality-network.org)

**Gendered Intelligence**

(work with the trans community, particularly young trans people)

[www.genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk)

**GIRES**

(education and research on gender identity)

[www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)

**LEAP Sports Scotland**

(work for greater inclusion for LGBTI people in sport and against homophobia in sport)

[www.leapsports.org](http://www.leapsports.org)

**LGB&T Sport Cymru**

(promoting opportunities for LGB and T individuals in sport & physical activity in Wales)

[www.lgbtsport.cymru](http://www.lgbtsport.cymru)

**Pride Sports**

(sport development organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people)

[www.pridesports.org.uk](http://www.pridesports.org.uk)

**Stonewall**

(campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain)

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

