



ENGLAND
HOCKEY

Trans & Non-Binary Participation Policy

INTRODUCTION

England Hockey (EH) is responsible for the management and development of the sport of hockey, from grassroots to elite activities. EH is also the current nominated country for Great Britain Hockey, with responsibility to lead the business operations and performance objectives, and the preparation of Great Britain squads for the Olympics.

We are committed to ensuring that the sport is visible, relevant and accessible to everyone. This includes making sure there are opportunities for everyone to be able to participate and that every individual in the game is welcomed, valued and treated with respect. We pride ourselves on the open and welcoming community for people from different backgrounds in our sport, ensuring anyone wanting to experience hockey has the opportunity to do so. It is our responsibility to make sure everyone, no matter what their identity or background, feels supported and involved in hockey.

This policy has been created to clarify the position regarding participation within hockey for male, female, **transgender** and **non-binary** players.

We have had in place a policy for **transgender** players since 2012, which was reviewed in 2017, and which we are now taking the opportunity to further review, taking into account the publication of the Sports Councils' Equality Group (SCEG) Guidance in 2021. We recognise that this is an evolving landscape of both policy and research, and that societal attitudes are ever-changing. As a result of the review, it is important to note that there has been a policy shift and it is imperative that all those involved in hockey recognise and understand these changes.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK / GENDER-AFFECTED

We recognise the following legislative acts and our obligations under these acts:

Gender Recognition Act	2004
Equality Act	2010

In addition, the SCEG guidance released in 2021 provided practical advice and support for sports when dealing with **transgender** and **non-binary** participation in domestic sport.



Section 195 of the Equality Act 2010 allows separate sporting competitions to continue to be organised for men and women where the sporting activity is **gender-affected**. The Act also makes it lawful to restrict participation of **trans people** in certain competitions if it is necessary to uphold fair or safe competition, but not otherwise.

Current available evidence shows that hockey is considered a **gender-affected sport**, in that the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one **sex** would put them at a disadvantage compared to the average persons of the other **sex**.

Competitive hockey requires the physical capabilities of strength, endurance, speed and acceleration as key factors for success. It must be noted that at the time of this review, the general evidence, and more specifically the hockey-based evidence, is still somewhat limited. As the evidence / research continues to develop we will seek to review our policy every 2 years, or sooner should new medical evidence require consideration. In addition, we also reserve the right to review should there be changes to government policy, guidance, research, legislation or changes to hockey via the international federation.

In reviewing our policy, we are also committed to providing advice, guidance and support to our staff, participants and the hockey community so that everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities under this policy. This guidance can be found [here](#)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Hockey Affected By This Policy (See Appendix A)

All hockey competitions that are listed in Appendix A, will now fall into two categories, a **Female** category and an **Open** category.

Female category:

- Participants recorded female at birth which includes trans men who have not undergone or are not undergoing gender-affirming hormone therapy.
- Once a trans man or non-binary participant (whose **birth sex** is recorded as female) has either commenced or completed gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) then they will no longer be eligible to participate in the Female category in any of the competitions/formats listed in Appendix A.

Open category:

- This category is open to all including those participants recorded male at birth, recorded female at birth (irrespective of whether they have ever commenced or completed gender-affirming hormone therapy), and those who identify as trans or non-binary.

Note: it is not the intention of this policy that complete teams of players recorded female at birth enter the Open category.

Participants will be unable to play across Female and Open categories in a single season, unless they become ineligible to participate in the Female category during a season in which case they can move from the Female to the Open category.



One exception to this would be where a participant may play in one category (i.e. female or Open) for their school (including in EH competitions affected by the policy) and the opposite category for all other hockey competitions affected by the policy. They must however play all school hockey competitions affected by this policy in the same category in any one season.

Under 12s:

- **Trans** participants aged 11 or under may compete in the gender they identify as. Once a **trans girl** becomes 12, they will be unable to compete in the Female category. To be eligible to compete in the Female category in Under-12 competitions (or older) listed in Appendix A, a **trans girl** must be 10 or under on 31 August preceding the season of participation.

Mixed Hockey (EH Mixed Championships only):

- We currently offer a Mixed Hockey Championship which consists of a team of 11 players from a squad of 16. At any time during a match a team shall consist of a minimum of 5 outfield players who were recorded female at birth and are eligible for the Female category.

International:

- To be selected for an England or Great Britain women's international team or programme, only participants recorded female at birth and eligible for the Female category will be considered. Should Hockey Wales and/or Scottish Hockey have different selection eligibility criteria then this policy will take precedence for Great Britain team selection.

Hockey outside of this policy (See Appendix B)

We encourage all **trans** and **non-binary** participants to play in the competitions / formats referred to in Appendix B in the gender they identify as.

The exception to this will be where an organiser, whose event sits outside those listed in Appendix A, has obtained permission from England Hockey for their event to align with the competitions set out in Appendix A, adopting the Female and Open participation categories. In such cases, the eligibility criteria must be expressly stated in the event regulations.

For all events that are not within or aligned to Appendix A, no formal identity verification is required.

Under no circumstances, regardless of whether the event is within Appendix A or Appendix B, should participants be challenged on their eligibility *during* an event. Any such behaviour or concerns should be reported to us in accordance with the process below.



DATA / PRIVACY / CONFIDENTIALITY

All information and documentation about a person's past or present gender status will be managed in accordance with our Data Protection policies, the data protection legislation in force at the time (e.g. General Data Protection Regulation / Data Protection Act 2018) and, where relevant, the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

We recognise that this is sensitive information and as such will treat it with the strictest confidence and only shared on a need-to-know basis, respecting at all times the participants right to privacy.

ANTI-DOPING

All participants, regardless of sex or gender, should be aware that they may be subject to doping control testing under the UK Anti-Doping Rules. The use of hormones may contravene the World Anti-Doping Agency Code. Trans or non-binary participants using hormones for the purpose of gender reassignment, are encouraged to contact UK Anti-Doping to determine whether a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) is required.

COMPLAINTS / DISCIPLINARY / APPEALS

We are committed to ensuring that any **trans** or **non-binary** participant should be able to access and enjoy the sport without fear of discrimination, prejudice or harassment.

Such behaviours are wholly unacceptable and may be subject to disciplinary action under the EH Disciplinary Regulations and we would ask that such incidents are reported in accordance with that process.

Alternatively, we may still wish to investigate any **transphobia** or gender-based discrimination that falls outside of this policy. Participants are not to be challenged on their eligibility during an event and we would ask that any such challenge, or transphobic or gender-based discrimination, is reported to us at trans.policy@englandhockey.co.uk.

Any participant wishing to appeal a decision made in accordance with this policy or participation eligibility, should appeal to us in writing by sending to trans.policy@englandhockey.co.uk, outlining the decision in question, the basis for the appeal and attaching any supporting documentation. The appeal will be heard by a panel of at least three people established for this purpose, to include a lawyer from one of EH's existing disciplinary panels (or in the alternative a person from Sport Resolutions where requested / agreed).

If a participant is wanting to appeal or challenge a decision made by a member body of EH in relation to **transphobia** or gender-based discrimination, then they should contact us in writing by sending to trans.policy@englandhockey.co.uk.



DEFINITIONS

Gender-Affected Sport	A sport in which the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one sex would put them at a disadvantage compared to average persons of the other sex as competitors in the activity.*
GAHT	Gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) is a treatment whereby individuals take hormones such as estrogen or testosterone, or hormone blockers, to align their physical traits with their gender identity.
Gender Identity	A person's sense of self as a man, woman, non-binary person or other sense of gender (including no gender). A person's gender may match their sex recorded at birth, or it may be different.
Gender Reassignment	A protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. A person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.*
Non-Binary	A person whose gender identity does not exclusively align with the categories of male or female.
Season	Means a standard EH hockey season, commencing in the 1 September of one calendar year and concluding on the 31 August of the following calendar year.
Sex	A legal and biological classification where people are recorded male or female, typically based on biological or physiological characteristics at birth.
Transgender or Trans Person	A person whose gender identity is not the same as their sex recorded at birth.
Trans Boy / Man	A person who is recorded female at birth but identifies as male.
Trans Girl / Woman	A person who is recorded male at birth but identifies as female.
Transphobia	Behaviour or language that is disrespectful toward a transgender person's identity, or which reflects irrational fear, hostility, or discrimination toward transgender people.

*(Definitions taken from * Equality Act 2010)*



REFERENCES

This policy follows a review that has explored and considered the most up-to-date peer-reviewed and published studies; the specific studies used are listed below.

1. **Effect of gender affirming hormones on athletic performance in transwomen and transmen: implications for sporting organisations and legislators.** Roberts TA, et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2021;55:577–583.
2. **Effects of moderately increased testosterone concentration on physical performance in young women: a double blind, randomised, placebo controlled study.** Hirschberg AL, et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2020;54:599–604
3. **How does hormone transition in transgender women change body composition, muscle strength and haemoglobin? Systematic review with a focus on the implications for sport participation.** Harper J, et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2021;55:865–872.
4. **Position statement: IOC framework on fairness, inclusion and non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex variations.** Martowicz, M et al. *Br J Sports Med* January 2023 Vol 57 No 1
5. **The International Olympic Committee framework on fairness, inclusion and non discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex variations does not protect fairness for female athletes.** Lundberg, T et al. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*. 2024;34
6. **The Biological Basis of Sex Differences in Athletic Performance: Consensus Statement for the American College of Sports Medicine.** Hunter, S et al. *Translational Journal of the ACSM* 8(4):p 1-33, Fall 2023.
7. **Fair and Safe Eligibility Criteria For Women's Sport.** Lundberg, T et al. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*. 2024; 34
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10. **Women and Men in Sport Performance: The Gender Gap has not Evolved since 1983.** Thibault, V, Guillaume, M et al. *J Sports Sci Med*. 2010 Jun; 9(2): 214–223.
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14. **Average Tennis Serve Speed Unleashing the Power of Your Serve: Understanding the Factors That Determine Tennis Serve Speed and How to Improve It.** Sampson, M. *TennisUniverse*; March 27th, 2023
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16. **Hockey Tracker: how fast can they go?** *FIH.com* June 8, 2014
17. **Effect Of Body Size And Gender On Drag-Flick Performance In Field Hockey: A Study On National Elite Players.** Rabii, Yasmeen Iqbal; *Webology* Volume 19, Number 3, 2022



18. **Injury data of major international field hockey tournaments.** Theilen T-M, et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2016;50:657–660.
19. **Guidance for Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport; and accompanying documents.** *Sports Councils (UK) Equality Group*; 2021
20. **Strength, power and aerobic capacity of transgender athletes: a cross-sectional study.** Hamilton, B et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2024;0:1–12

Document Name	Trans and Non-Binary Participation Policy
Version	4
Date Approved / Reviewed	Oct 2024 / August 2025
Owner	Governance
Approved By	EH Board
Next review	August 2027



APPENDIX A

Hockey affected by this Policy

England Hockey

- England & GB International Teams or Programmes
- England Hockey Leagues
- England Hockey Championships (Mixed, Junior, Adult, Masters, County)
- Area Masters Championships
- Indoor Competitions & Super 6s
- All Talent System Competitions (Talent Academy and Junior County Hockey)
- Schools Championships (Tier 1-3)
- State School Festivals (U12 and above)
- U13 In2Hockey Schools Championships
- U12 In2Hockey Club Championships

Area

- Adult Leagues – Grades 1-5¹²
- Area Adult Cup Competitions
- Area Junior Leagues & Competitions
- Area Indoor Competitions
- Area Schools Championships (Tier 1-3)
- Area State School Festivals (U12 and above)
- Area U12 & U13 In2Hockey Schools Championships
- Area U12 In2Hockey Club Championships
- Area Masters Teams including Inter-County Activity

County

- County Adult Cup Competitions
- County Junior Leagues & Competitions
- County Indoor Competitions
- County Schools Championships (Tier 1-3)
- County State School Festivals (U12 and above)
- County U12 & U13 In2Hockey Schools Championships
- County U12 In2Hockey Club Championships
- Adult County Championship teams
- County Masters Teams and Cup Competitions

¹ Development teams entered into Area Grade 5 leagues will be covered by this policy regardless of EH Regulation 7.2.1

² Any Hockey Wales or Scottish Hockey clubs that play in EH leagues will be covered by this policy regardless of Hockey Wales and Scottish Hockey policies on trans participation in hockey.



APPENDIX B

Hockey outside of this Policy

This is all hockey that isn't listed in Appendix A.

Note :

There are competitions that are not directly governed by England Hockey. These would be required to make a separate decision on whether to align with this policy. In particular British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) and Independent School / Selective State School competitions.