

Transsexual people playing hockey – guidance for local hockey organisations



**ENGLAND
HOCKEY**

Guidance for local hockey organisations

England Hockey (EH) is committed to ensuring that there is open access to all those who wish to participate in the sport and that they are treated fairly. It is also committed to confronting and eliminating discrimination whether by reason of any protected characteristic - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic origin, nationality and colour) religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Under current UK legislation, hockey, as a gender-affected sport, may be regulated by the EH in respect of the participation of a transsexual person.

EH has a clear policy with regards to transsexual people playing hockey and you should already be running your organisation in line with its policies.

A transsexual man or boy is permitted to participate fully, i.e. train, play in informal matches or play in hockey competitions, as male. Verification of their sex should be no more than is expected of any other male player. The only restriction is that for international competition the transsexual male would have to have undergone gender confirmation surgery, have blood-tested sex hormone levels that are no higher than the typical range in men and must have legal recognition of his affirmed gender.

Transsexual females may participate in training or informal matches and it would not be necessary for anyone to know anything about a person's affirmed gender. Its only if a transsexual female wishes to compete in female or mixed gender hockey competitions where winning or losing has a meaningful outcome might it be necessary to ensure that there is no unfair advantage over opposing players. At this point the EH procedures should be followed and it's Ethics and Compliance Manager contacted.

The use of changing and toilet facilities prior, to and during gender reassignment where the individual may present an ambiguous appearance and may be highly self-conscious represents a difficult issue. Many transsexual 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 transsexual people who do not undergo sex reassignment surgery and will continue to present with secondary sex characteristics in their former gender. In line with good safeguarding practice it is recommended that adults (unless they are the parents) do not use the same changing facilities as children under the age of 18 unless there are separate cubicles. If this cannot be avoided due to the nature of the facility it is recommended that all adults come ready changed for their hockey activity.

Complaints from other users must be handled carefully. It may be that other users find it uncomfortable to share facilities with transsexual people but it is the duty of club officials to ensure that confidentiality is not compromised and that members are not subjected to abuse, whether physical or verbal, on any ground. However other users' or members' discomfort must not be ignored and they too should be treated with dignity, should their discomfort continues they may arrive ready changed for their hockey activity. The provision of good quality facilities, an open and welcoming atmosphere and training for members may help alleviate such discomfort.

If someone tells you that they are a transsexual person, or you become aware of an individual's situation you should:

- Treat the transsexual person with dignity and respect.
- Explain the policy and procedures and ask their view on how to proceed. Explain that there are no restrictions on training or playing in 'friendly' matches.
- Respect the private and confidential nature of the person's situation.
- Agree with the transsexual person how information is to be shared with others if this is necessary.
- Support the transsexual person with their choice of changing facilities where possible.
- Take prompt and decisive action against anyone in the organisation whose behaviour or language is inappropriate or offensive to or about transsexual people. Use your disciplinary procedures to manage this.
- Ensure a Code of Conduct is publicised indicating your zero-tolerance policy towards all bullying/harassment of people with protected characteristics.
- Ensure that any training the organisation undertakes with regards to equality covers transsexual people and the policy as well as the general equality policy.

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