

THE SEX & GENDER PARTICIPATION POLICY FOR ICE HOCKEY IN THE UK

1. DEFINITIONS

TERM	MEANING
Gender	<p>The UK government* defines gender as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity; gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were assigned at birth ▪ where an individual may see themselves as a man, a woman, as having no gender, or as having a non-binary gender, where people identify as somewhere on a spectrum between man and woman <p>(*ONS. What is the difference between sex and gender. 2019)</p>
Gender Affected Sport	<p>The Equality Act 2010 defines a Gender Affected Sport as a sport, game, or other activity of a competitive nature in circumstances 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 events involving the activity</p>
Girl	Female child
IIHF	The International Ice Hockey Federation
Meaningful Competition	<p>This term is used in the Sports Councils in their Guidance for Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport (2021) to differentiate competitive and non-competitive sport</p>
Non-Binary Gender	<p>Where people identify as somewhere on a spectrum between man and woman</p> <p>(*ONS. What is the difference between sex and gender. 2019)</p>
Sex	<p>The UK government defines Sex as referring to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones, and their interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ generally male or female ▪ something that is assigned at birth <p>(*ONS. What is the difference between sex and gender. 2019)</p>
Transgender or Trans:	<p>A person whose Gender identity is different from their physical sex at birth. Those people who, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, share the protected characteristic of Gender reassignment, and are described as Transsexual people under the legislation</p>
The Parties	<p>The Parties to this Policy – Ice Hockey UK (IHUK), England Ice Hockey (EIH), Scottish Ice Hockey (SIH), Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL)</p>
The Policy	This Sex & Gender Participation Policy for ice hockey in the UK
Woman	Adult human female

2. THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

- 2.1 This Policy has been developed and approved by the three national governing bodies for ice hockey in the UK; Ice Hockey UK (IHUK), England Ice Hockey (EIH), Scottish Ice Hockey (SIH), and the Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL).
- 2.2 It applies to all of the activity within their respective jurisdiction.
- 2.3 Within this Policy, IHUK, EIH, SIH and EIHL shall be referenced collectively as ‘The Parties’.

3. COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & WELFARE

- 3.1 The Parties are committed to;
 - 3.1.1 Ensuring that their activities are inclusive and to diversifying the participation base within the sport, the talent pool and the workforce.
 - 3.1.2 Developing a culture which is as inclusive as possible, where everyone feels safe and is able to raise concerns about any unacceptable practice, language, behaviour, wrongdoing or misconduct.
 - 3.1.3 Protecting and supporting the wellbeing and welfare of players.
- 3.2 For the avoidance of doubt, transphobia of any kind will not be tolerated within Ice Hockey. If anyone believes they have suffered or witnessed any instances of transphobia they are encouraged to raise their concerns with the relevant club, event organiser or governing body for ice hockey. Concerns will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated as appropriate.

4. SEX AND GENDER

- 4.1 The Parties recognise and acknowledge each individual’s right to define their own Gender, regardless of their Sex at birth and fully support their right to choose if, when and how to reveal that Gender to others.

5. INFLUENCES ON THIS POLICY

- 5.1 There have been significant developments in this Policy area over the last few years which have influenced The Parties’ position and this Policy. This Policy has been influenced by:
 - The UK Legislative framework
 - The UK’s Sports Councils Equality Group’s (“SCEG’s”) guidelines
 - The International Ice Hockey’s (IIHF) policy decision
 - Consultation with players and other key stakeholder groups

6. THE UK'S LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Gender Recognition Act 2004

- 6.1 The Gender Recognition Act 2004¹ allows Trans people to change their legal Gender if they wish to. Obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate allows for Trans people to be legally recognised in their affirmed Gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. In practical terms, legal recognition will have the effect that, for example a Trans woman, will be legally recognised as a female in English law. It is against the law to disclose that someone has applied for a Gender Recognition Certificate or was previously legally a different sex, if the information was obtained in an official capacity.

The Equality Act (2010)²

- 6.2 The Equality Act (2010) makes direct or indirect discrimination, against a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, against the law.
- 6.3 The Equality Act makes specific provision for sports organisations to restrict participation by Trans people as competitors in an event, or events, involving a Gender Affected sport. A sport is considered a Gender Affected Sport if the physical strength, stamina, or physique of average persons of one gender would put them at a disadvantage to average persons of the other Gender, as competitors in events involving the sport.
- 6.4 Such prohibition or restrictions can only be made in order to secure fair competition or the safety of competitors at the event or events.

7. THE UK'S SPORTS COUNCILS GUIDANCE FOR TRANSGENDER INCLUSION IN DOMESTIC SPORT (IN THE UK)

- 7.1 The Sports Councils' Equality Group (SCEG) commissioned a review of its existing Guidance (2013/15) for the inclusion of Transgender people in sport and published its findings in 2021.³
- 7.2 This review investigated the views, knowledge, and experience of hundreds of people with a lived experience in sport, including Transgender people. It explored the background to current policies domestically and internationally and also considered the latest scientific findings affecting the inclusion of Transgender people in domestic sport
- 7.3 Amongst its findings, the Guidance concludes that the inclusion of Transgender people into female sport cannot be balanced regarding Transgender inclusion, fairness and safety in Gender Affected Sport where there is Meaningful Competition. This is due to

¹ [Gender Recognition Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/2)

² [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15)

³ [Transgender inclusion in domestic sport guidance published | UK Sport](#)

retained differences in strength, stamina and physique between the average Woman compared with the average Transgender woman or Non Binary person assigned male at birth, with or without testosterone suppression.

- 7.4 The Sports Councils have encouraged national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) and other sporting bodies, to use the guiding principles published in the report (these are set out below), in developing their Transgender policies which are most suitable for their sport and for their communities.

The UK's Sports Councils' Guidance For Transgender Inclusion In Domestic Sport – The Guidance

- All the Sports Councils are committed to the inclusion of Transgender people in sport and physical activity
- Categorisation within the sex binary is and remains the most useful and functional division relative to sporting performance
- Evidence indicates it is fair and safe for Transgender people to be included within the male category in most sports
- Competitive fairness cannot be reconciled with self-identification into the female category in Gender Affected Sport
- Based upon current evidence, testosterone suppression is unlikely to guarantee fairness between Transgender women and natal females in Gender Affected Sports
- 'Case-by-case' assessment is unlikely to be practical nor verifiable for entry into Gender Affected Sports.
- Categorisation by Sex is lawful, and hence the requirement to request information relating to birth Sex is appropriate.
- There are likely to be times in which some Transgender people cannot or choose not to be registered, either in the short or long-term, within Sex Binary categories.
- The ability of NGBs to provide the best mix of sporting options for the broader community may be determined by whether a model is intended as physical activity and participation, or whether it represents Meaningful Competition.
- Achieving inclusion across all the strands of the Equality Act is complex and nuanced.

- 7.5 The Parties acknowledge the robustness of this research and have developed this Policy for ice hockey in the UK, drawing strongly from the recommendations and guidance set out in this report.

8. THE INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY'S (IIHF) TRANSGENDER POLICY

- 8.1 The current IIHF Transgender Policy⁴ came into effect on 01 June 2021 and applies solely to international competition within the jurisdiction of IIHF. It does not apply to domestic competition in the UK.

⁴ [2022_iihf_transgender_policy.pdf](#)

- 8.2 Paragraph 2.6 of the IIHF policy (shown below) provides for IHUK as a member Federation of IIHF, to develop its own policy. IHUK has chosen to do this in conjunction the other Parties to this Policy.

2.6 *It is recommended that each Member National Association (MNA) adopts its own regulations to determine the eligibility of Transgender athletes to compete in events taking place under its own jurisdiction. At the level of national championships (or similar), it is recommended that this Policy is followed. At lower levels, however, less stringent eligibility requirements may be imposed, where appropriate. For the avoidance of doubt, however, anything that the MNA does (or does not do) at national level will not affect the eligibility of Transgender athletes to compete in IIHF Competitions. That will instead be determined exclusively by reference to this Policy.*

9. THE SEX & GENDER PARTICIPATION POLICY FOR ICE HOCKEY IN THE UK

- 9.1 The Parties are committed to providing and supporting opportunities for participation in ice hockey but are equally aware of their responsibilities to ensure that the playing opportunities provided are safe and fair for all participants.
- 9.2 This means that when determining the eligibility criteria, the Parties have recognised that a precautionary approach is required, to enable considerations of safety and fairness to be balanced against inclusion.
- 9.3 Whilst undertaking the review and reaching a position on eligibility, the Parties have been mindful of the legislation in this area, including the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 9.4 Section 195 (2) of the Equality Act (EA) states that “A person does not contravene section 29, 33, 34 or 35 [of the EA], so far as relating to gender reassignment, only by doing anything in relation to the participation of a transsexual person as a competitor in a gender-affected activity if it is necessary to do so to secure in relation to the activity (a) fair competition, or (b) the safety of competitors”.
- 9.5 The Parties have been strongly guided by the findings from the consultation survey which took place across the sport in the UK, in July 2024.
- 9.6 The Parties have also been strongly guided by the recommendations of the Sports Councils and have concluded that the inclusion of Trans people assigned male at birth in female contact sport, cannot be balanced against considerations of safety and fairness. This is due to retained advantages in strength, stamina and physique between the average Transgender woman assigned male at birth (who has passed through puberty and adolescence), and the average Woman. Recent research has shown that this advantage is retained even with testosterone suppression.

- 9.7 The Parties have determined that ice hockey is a Gender Affected Sport and that all forms of participation can be categorised as Meaningful Competition.
- 9.8 The Parties have concluded that, due to developmental changes brought about by male puberty, and the physical nature of ice hockey as a collision sport, it is both appropriate and necessary to maintain a female only category (female Sex at birth) of ice hockey and to set out certain eligibility requirements for male categories from the Under 12 years age grade upwards and continuing into the adult game.
- 9.9 The Parties have concluded, based on the evidence available to them, that it is fair and safe for Transgender people to be included within the male category within ice hockey, but because of the physical nature of ice hockey as a collision sport, participation must be subject to risk assessment and consent processes.
- 9.10 The Parties have concluded that where mixed competition already exists or may exist in the future, this should be open to players of any Gender.
- 9.11 These eligibility requirements are set out in Section 10 below.

10. SEX, GENDER, TRANSGENDER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN ICE HOCKEY IN THE UK

- 10.1 The following Sex, Gender and Transgender eligibility requirements apply to participation in ice hockey activity under the jurisdiction of IHUK, EIH, SIH & EIHL:

AGE GRADE ICE HOCKEY (TRAINING & PLAYING) ELIGIBILITY	
(a) PLAYING AGE UNDER 11 YEARS AND BELOW – MIXED CATEGORIES	Mixed-Gender ice hockey is permitted. Players can play without approval, irrespective of the Gender with which they identify.
(b) UNDER 12 TO UNDER 18 YEARS AGE GRADE – MALE AND FEMALE CATEGORIES	Players are only permitted to play in the Gender category of the Sex that was originally recorded at birth, unless otherwise permitted under this Policy. See point (c) and (d) below.
(c) UNDER 12 TO UNDER 18 YEARS AGE GRADE – MALE CATEGORY	Players are permitted to play in this category if the player’s Sex recorded at birth is male. If the player’s Sex recorded at birth is female and the player identifies as Transgender, Non-Binary or Gender Fluid, the player may play if:

	<p>i) their parent or guardian (or such other appropriate adult) provides their written consent in the form requested by any of IHUK, EIH, SIH, EIHL (as appropriate) to the relevant club; and</p> <p>ii) an appropriate risk assessment is carried out by the club which the player is representing in the form prescribed by the relevant Party; and the relevant Party is notified prior to the player participating in the contact ice hockey activity.</p>
(d) UNDER 12 TO UNDER 18 YEARS AGE GRADE – FEMALE CATEGORY	Players are only permitted to play in the female category if the Sex that was originally recorded at birth is female.
ADULT ICE HOCKEY (TRAINING AND PLAYING)	
(e) ADULT MALE CATEGORY	<p>Players are permitted to play in this category if the player’s Sex recorded at birth is male.</p> <p>If the player’s Sex recorded at birth is female and the player identifies as Transgender or Non-Binary, the player may play if:</p> <p>i) the player provides written consent in the form requested by IHUK, EIH,SIH or EIHL (as appropriate) to the relevant club; and</p> <p>ii) an appropriate risk assessment is carried out by the club which the player is representing, as determined by IHUK, EIH,SIH or EIHL (as appropriate) (see Section 11 below); and</p> <p>iii) IHUK, EIH,SIH or EIHL (as appropriate) is notified prior to the player participating in the activity; and</p> <p>iv) the player has obtained a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) if required in accordance with the UK Anti-Doping Rules.</p>
(f) ADULT FEMALE CATEGORY	Players are only permitted to play in the female category if the Sex that was originally recorded at birth was female and they are not undergoing hormone treatment (for example, a Transgender man may continue to play in the Women’s category of ice hockey provided no hormone treatment has commenced).

(g) ADULT MIXED CATEGORY	Where mixed competition already exists or may exist in the future, this should be open to players of any Gender.
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11. RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 11.1 All players must acknowledge that ice hockey is a high speed collision sport and there are risks associated with participating in training and matches. Specifically in the male category, factors such as physical development, technical ability and ice competency should all be taken into consideration.
- 11.2 A risk assessment should be carried out in respect of all Transgender players participating in ice hockey, as determined by IHUK, EIH, SIH or EIHL (as appropriate).
- 11.3 In respect of Transgender men (age grade and adult) wanting to participate in the category that is different to the Sex recorded at birth, a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine that the risks of playing ice hockey for that individual have been considered and suitable safeguards put in place to ensure the reasonable safety of the player.

12. VOLUNTEERING/COACHING/OFFICIATING

- 12.1 The Parties welcome everyone who wishes to be actively involved in the sport and consider that there should be no barriers to involvement in coaching, officiating and volunteering.
- 12.2 The Parties confirm that anyone can hold any role without approval, irrespective of the gender with which they identify.

13. DATA PROTECTION

- 13.1 The Parties as data controllers, must ensure that any personal data processed in relation to this Policy is in compliance with data protection laws and their own internal data protection policy. In particular:
- 13.1.1 The collection of data must be necessary, proportionate, and relevant to the particular purpose and circumstance. Where data is collected for verification purposes and does not need to be retained, it should be deleted as soon as practicable. Where information does need to be retained this should be in line with the Party's data retention policy.
- 13.1.2 The Parties must be clear and transparent at the outset about why this data is being held and for what purpose. Any additional purposes for processing this data must be communicated to the individual before the processing commences.
- 13.1.3 Access to this information should be tightly controlled and on a strictly need to know basis. The Parties will only share necessary information with competition organisers for the purposes of verifying the status of the Trans person.

13.1.4 The Parties will agree with the Trans person how information is to be shared with others if this is necessary; this may include a change of name and title, and this should be accommodated without prejudice or aggravation.

13.1.5 The Parties will complete and keep under review a data protection impact assessment for this processing due to the potential privacy risks involved.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

14.1 All personal information provided to the Parties under this Policy will be always dealt with in strict confidence and will be handled in accordance with the relevant Party's privacy policy.

15. CONTACT INFORMATION

15.1 For any questions on the Policy please contact participation@icehockeyuk.co.uk