



Participation and Gender Eligibility Guidelines

Contents

Introduction	3
Everyone's Game	4
Venue and facilities	5
Data capture and monitoring	5
Use of language and pronouns	6
Dress codes and playing kit	6
Competitive opportunities for all	7
Sources used to create this guidance	7
Contacting us	7

Participation & Gender Eligibility Guidelines

Introduction

Table Tennis England (TTE) wants table tennis to be a sport that is Everyone's Game. It seeks to ensure that the sport is welcoming, accessible and attractive to everyone. We celebrate diversity and are committed to developing a culture that is as inclusive as it can be, and which reflects TTE's core values: Rally Together, Everyone's Game, Play to Win.

Behaviour that intimidates, humiliates or makes a participant feel unsafe is not welcome in table tennis and we encourage participants to report concerns to TTE at: help@tabletennisengland.co.uk.

In early 2025 an internal working group was formed to discuss TTE's position regarding gender eligibility in regulated events. It was agreed that table tennis is a gender-affected sport insofar as fairness is concerned, and that eligibility for the women's category in TTE-regulated events should change. During the working group review, TTE conducted a thorough consultation with members to understand the table tennis community's views regarding our proposed policy and to better understand the impact that

the proposed policy may have. The consultation included publishing an online survey, which received over 2,000 responses, conducting interviews with people involved in the sport and with organisations who have relevant knowledge and expertise, and conducting a review of existing research, guidance and policies applied in other sports. Our consultation has helped shape these guidelines incorporating lived experience and a range of voices. You can find the Consultation Summary Report [here](#).

This guidance replaces our previous 'Transgender Guidance Notes'. The purpose is to provide practical advice and guidance to ensure table tennis is Everyone's Game. These guidelines are considered good practice and are intended for anyone involved in or present at a table tennis activity.

If you are looking for practical advice and guidance on application of the TTE Gender Eligibility Policy in competition environments at a national-ranked level, please refer to the Gender Eligibility Guidelines for Competition, which can be found [here](#).

Everyone's Game

Gender identity is personal to everyone and the decision to transition to another gender is not one that anyone takes lightly, with someone often spending years feeling that they are living in a gender role that does not reflect who they are. The process of transitioning may have affected their mental and physical health, relationships and careers.

If you know of someone who is transgender, or you have a new person join your group who is transgender, have a sensitive conversation with them to understand if they need any support from you during their journey.

When participating in sport and physical activity, someone who is transgender wants to be accepted in their affirmed gender. Treating everyone with respect is of paramount importance, regardless of their gender identity, ethnicity, disability or any other demographic characteristic.

It is also important to acknowledge the feelings of those who may not have met a transgender person before, and who may initially find it difficult to understand and accept them. People's prejudices are often a result of a lack of knowledge and understanding, therefore it is our responsibility to inform

and signpost learning to everyone involved within our sport.

It is good practice to make it clear to all individuals of the type of conduct that will not be tolerated and how people can report unacceptable behaviour, through the appropriate policy. TTE provides a series of tools for clubs, coaches, referees, players, volunteers and parents from grassroots to elite table tennis to ensure a safe, positive environment in which to enjoy the game, where everyone is respected, valued and has the right to be protected from any form of abuse. More information about our safeguarding guidelines, reporting concerns, and our SafeTT Policy can be found through the link provided [here](#).

The eligibility of someone participating will not be questioned during any activity. Any challenge to someone's eligibility should be reported by email to help@tabletennisengland.co.uk. If you witness inappropriate or bullying behaviour and wish to make a complaint, or tell us about something that has happened, please use the following [form](#).

Venues and facilities

There are many differences between the venues that are used for table tennis activities, including the facilities available, and it is not possible for TTE as a governing body to provide advice to organisers, venues or officials on how best to provide changing and toilet facilities in a way which is inclusive for everyone. Each venue should be considered independently. For example: if you rent a venue, you should have a conversation with the venue manager to understand what policies are in place to support men, women, transgender and non-binary people. For those who manage or own their own facility, you should consult with your committee to make decisions and clearly communicate these across your organisation.

We recommend that you provide clear information on the gendering of changing facilities and toilets, including what is inside the changing room, for example;

- Are they mixed changing with private cubicles or for gender specific?
- Are the toilets inside the changing rooms or in a separate area?
- Are the changing rooms open plan or are there private cubicles?

This detail will allow people to decide which changing room to use.

Data capture and monitoring

If your organisation collects demographic data on gender identity or sex, for example for monitoring, or participation in activities, you can adapt how you ask for this information to be more inclusive from the outset. It is good practice to only collect what you absolutely need to collect and share why you are collecting this data and what it will be used for, ensuring you are compliant with GDPR and other data protection legislation.

For example, you could ask;

What is your gender identity?

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary

What is your sex assigned at birth?

- Male
- Female

Use of language and pronouns

The language we use matters. Language can have a significant impact on others, therefore it is extremely important that we use inclusive language. We know that it can sometimes be worrying for people who may not be sure of the right language to use and who don't want to say things which might negatively affect another person.

Wherever possible, gender-neutral language should be used, e.g. instead of "Welcome ladies and gents" or "Listen guys", it is preferable to use, "Welcome everyone" or "listen team/players". When advertising activities, be clear about who can attend. This will assist people to decide if they wish to participate e.g.

"This session is for women including trans women and non-binary people".

Everyone has pronouns and a preference for how they are used, such as she/her/hers. A trans or non-binary person may use pronouns when introducing themselves for the first time. When a person uses their pronouns, it normalises talking about their preferences and how they would like to be referred. Gender identity is an individual's self-affirmed gender. This may be the same as or different to the individual's biological sex. Discussing pronouns can help prevent an assumption around the gender identity of a person.

If you do not know which pronouns that someone would like to be referred by, you could ask them which pronoun they prefer, or you could use non-identifying pronouns (they, them, their) or use their name instead. This will avoid misgendering the person and create a comfortable environment.

You can find more information under 'Sources used to create this guidance' on page 7.

Dress codes and playing kit

Be clear about kit expectations or offer suggestions on what is suitable kit to wear for a session. This may be obvious to those who have played table tennis before or participated in other sports – but will be a new experience for some people.

This could be as simple as the following;

"We suggest clothing that you are comfortable getting sweaty in, not wearing clothing that presents a tripping risk (such as trousers that are too long), and trainers or comfortable footwear."

Competitive opportunities for all

We want to make table tennis Everyone's Game and as inclusive as possible. Everyone can play in the competition category that aligns with their gender identity in any competition that is below a national-ranked level, including in local clubs, leagues and recreational activity. We will continue to explore opportunities that allow table tennis to be Everyone's Game and are committed to creating welcoming spaces for all to be able to enjoy the sport.

For details on how our Gender Eligibility policy applies at a national-ranked level, please refer to the Gender Eligibility Guidelines for Competition which includes details on:

- Categorisation of Competition Formats
- Determining gender eligibility for the "Men's Open (or Boys' Open)" or "Women's (or Girls)" competition categories
- Competition Entry
- Changes to the naming of the "Men's" category
- TTE rankings/ ratings
- Mixed Competition
- TTE Membership
- TTE Schools
- England/ GB Talent Pathway
- Changes to Personal Details
- Queries, Checks & Complaints

Sources used to create this guidance

LGBT Foundation and Greater Manchester Moving (2025) [Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion in Sports, Movement and Exercise: A Guide for Sports and Leisure Organisations](#)

Women in Sport (2025) [Trans Inclusion: Guidance for NGBs \[webpage\]](#)

Leap Sports (2020) [Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport](#)

Inc Project (2025) [Inclusive Sport \[webpage\]](#)

Sport Scotland (2025) [LGBTQIA+ \[webpage\]](#)

Contacting us

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact TTE using the following [form](#).

All enquiries will be treated sensitively in accordance with TTE's regulations and procedures, and data protection legislation.

A copy of TTE's privacy policy can be found [here](#).