

British Weight Lifting Transgender and Transsexual Policy

BWL is currently working with the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) to ensure this policy is compliant with the needs of the sport across the World and is compliant with the requirements of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC). It should therefore also be read in conjunction with the latest information as displayed on the IWF, IOC and IPC websites.

1. Introduction and policy statement

British Weight Lifting has developed a policy in respect of transgender people, which includes those who are transsexual and transgender, in all aspects of the Sport: lifters, employees, coaches, volunteers and spectators.

British Weight Lifting will promote a zero tolerance approach to transphobia. Transphobia includes discriminatory language or behavior directed towards anyone who comes under the umbrella term of transgender; in addition, it may be towards a transsexual person's friend or supporter, or anyone that may be perceived to be a transsexual person (whether they are transsexual or not). The behaviour may include a reluctance or refusal to provide access to services to the same extent as that provided for a non-transsexual person. British Weight Lifting and its affiliated clubs will ensure that any unacceptable behaviour and language is tackled effectively and appropriately and sanctions and /or educational programmes implemented to ensure compliance and the creation of a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for trans people.

The following points are considered good practice for BWL officials:

- Treat the individual with dignity and respect.
- Explain the BWL policy and procedure and ask their view on how to proceed. Provide contact details for the BWL contact.
- Respect the private and confidential nature of the individual's situation.
- Agree with the individual what information is to be shared with others and, if this is necessary, how this should be shared. In general no information should be shared by the local official unless they have express permission from the transsexual person. Thereafter, the BWL policy with regard to information sharing should be followed.
- Ask the individual what communal changing facilities they would prefer to use, as not every changing facility will have private cubicles. This will depend on whether the individual has transitioned or is in the process of transitioning and whether they have undergone any gender reassignment surgery. It may be that the most appropriate option is to use the cubicles in the toilets appropriate to their full time gender role, or that they should arrive changed and ready to participate, to avoid any misunderstanding should they still have secondary sex characteristics of their former gender. In line with good safeguarding practice, British Weight Lifting recommends that adults (unless they are parents) do not use the same changing facilities as children under the age of 18 unless there are separate cubicles.

- Encourage the individual to feedback any inappropriate language or behavior from other individuals so that it can be dealt with.
- Ensure a Code of Conduct is publicised indicating their zero-tolerance policy towards all bullying/harassment of people with protected characteristics

2. Trans people competing:

BWL must not restrict the participation of a transsexual person in the sport unless this is strictly necessary to uphold fair or safe competition; any other restriction would amount to direct discrimination. BWL will treat a transsexual person as belonging to the sex in which they present (as opposed to the biological sex they were born with) unless this might give the transsexual person an unfair advantage or would be a risk to the safety of competitors. Any negative effect of restricting the participation of transsexual people must be mitigated as far as possible, to permit as much inclusion as is fair and safe.

British Weight Lifting recognises that consistency with IWF's position is appropriate for international competition. IWF itself is in the process of adopting IOC guidelines. In line with guidance from UK Sport, British Weight Lifting has therefore adopted the IOC's statement with regards to transsexual athletes and their status in international competitions.

However, these guidelines do not allow for the different approaches to treatment and legal status in the UK. The Sports Council advises that they should not therefore be applied to domestic competitions run by UK NGBs. A more pragmatic solution is to adopt different policies for the inclusion of transsexual lifters, depending on whether the lifter seeks to participate in domestic or international competitions and taking into consideration the difference between transsexual people. The aim should be to include transgender people, as far as is possible.

Accordingly, for domestic competition, British Weight Lifting has adopted the Home Countries Sports Council Equality Group policy framework for non-contact sports for competition at domestic level:

Affirmed Gender Domestic Competition

Any transsexual male (female-to-male transsexual person) - May compete in his affirmed gender in any male or mixed sex domestic competition

Transsexual woman over 16 and post-puberty (male-to female transsexual person) - May compete in her affirmed gender in female or mixed sex domestic competition by providing evidence that her hormone therapy has brought her blood- measured testosterone levels within the range of her affirmed gender or that she has had a gonadectomy

Or

She may compete in any male or mixed-sex competition if she has not started treatment.

Transsexual girl – under 16 and post-puberty - Either she may compete in her affirmed gender in any female or mixed-sex domestic competitions subject to an individual case-by-case review, if required, undertaken by the NGB

Or

She may compete in any male or mixed-sex competition if she has not started hormone treatment.

Transsexual girl – pre puberty - May compete in her affirmed gender in any female or mixed-sex domestic competition subject to confirmation of her stage of pubertal development

Note: Anyone may compete in Open events.

In the case of transsexual people who have a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC), the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) (section 19) is not breached where prohibition or restriction of their participation is necessary to secure fair competition, or the safety of competitors, including that of transsexual people themselves. Similarly, under the Equality Act 2010, all transsexual people are protected against discrimination, but this should be proportionate to the aim of securing fair and safe competition.

For the time being, the designated point of contact at British Weight Lifting for all enquiries relating to the participation of transgender or transsexual people in weight lifting is the Lead Equity Officer, who will liaise with British Weight Lifting's Medical Advisor.

3. Trans people as spectators:

Spectators may themselves be transgender and may be subjected to transphobic comments from others around them. Transphobic language and behaviour can be reported either directly to club officers or event officials. In the same way that racist or homophobic language and behaviour is challenged it is vital that coaches and club staff respond to transphobic language whenever it happens and take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation safely and effectively.

Transphobic comments from spectators may also be directed at lifters. This is not always because a lifter is known to be trans, but simply as a term of abuse, in the same way that 'gay' may be used as a derogatory term, even if there are no gay people present. Whenever phobic language is used it creates a hostile environment and must be addressed.

4. Transsexual people as British Weight Lifting employees:

British Weight Lifting will not discriminate against transsexual people in any aspect of their employment and will endeavour to ensure that the culture of the workplace is supportive and welcoming throughout the transitioning process or as a transgender person.

In accordance with our Equity policy, and other key policies such as the BWL anti-bullying policy, any discrimination or unfair or unreasonable behaviour or treatment will be taken seriously and action taken in accordance with the Employee Handbook.

British Weight Lifting will work to meet the individual needs of each person to ensure that they have a positive experience of their employment with British Weight Lifting.

Confidentiality:

It is illegal under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 for a person who has acquired the information in an official capacity to disclose personal information about a transgender person's gender history once he/she has applied for a gender recognition certificate or been granted one, except with his/her permission or in other very limited circumstances. Any information relating to a transsexual person's former gender (regardless of whether or not they have a Gender Recognition Certificate) is also likely to be classed as sensitive personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.

APPENDIX 1: Preferred terms:

In the UK context, a **transsexual person** is someone whose gender identity does not match their physical body **and** who proposes to undergo, is already undergoing, or has undergone 'gender reassignment', that is a permanent change of gender role, which may or may not be facilitated by medical treatment such as hormones or surgery. This is not the same as a cross-dresser or transvestite, nor is it the same as sexual orientation. Transsexual people, as well as those who transition part or full time from living as men to living as women, or vice versa, may prefer the description 'trans woman' or 'trans man'.

The term **transgender** originally referred to individuals who had chosen to live as the opposite gender without the aid of surgery or hormones. Currently, transgender is used as an umbrella term which includes all people who have gender identities, expressions, or behaviours not traditionally associated with their birth sex, which may be expressed intermittently or full time. This includes, individuals such as transsexuals and cross dressers, as well as other gender variant individuals, this may (but does not necessarily) include, male-to-female and female-to-male transsexuals, male and female cross dressers, drag kings and queens, and others with non-traditional gender expressions. Some people also regard themselves as non-gendered, i.e. people who identify as neither male nor female and may have medical treatments that neutralise their sex characteristics.

In this document the description 'transsexual person' is used in respect of those who transition their role permanently, because this is a protected characteristic and the law distinguishes between them, and those who fall under the wider transgender umbrella description. Gender identity disorder (GID) is the formal diagnosis used by psychologists and physicians to describe persons who experience significant gender dysphoria (discontent with their biological sex and/or the gender they were assigned at birth).

The role change is not a life-style choice. The change of role and medical treatments help to align the physical presentation with the innate gender identity thus alleviating the gender dysphoria. The changes are onerous and challenging, and are not undertaken lightly, nor in order to gain competitive advantage.

APPENDIX 2: Related Legislation

Equality Act 2010

The law covers transgender people in different ways. The small number of transsexual people who, by definition, have the 'protected characteristic' of 'gender reassignment', are specifically protected, by the Equality Act 2010, from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services, from the time that they disclose their intention to change their role.

However, equality law does also protect individuals in the wider transgender community, if they are discriminated against or harassed on the grounds that they are 'perceived' to be transsexual, as well as those who are 'associated' with a transsexual person, such as partners, family members or carers.

The Act is, therefore, relevant to transgender employees, club members, volunteers and spectators who are, or who may be perceived to be transsexual and could, potentially, be subjected to transphobic behaviour.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

A minority of the people who have undergone permanent transition of their gender role, obtain a gender recognition certificate (GRC) in accordance with the Gender Recognition Act, 2004 (GRA). In order to obtain a GRC it is not necessary to have had genital or other surgeries. Those whose births were registered in the UK, automatically receive a new birth certificate. The GRA provides enhanced privacy protection with regard to sensitive information about their gender status, from the time of application to the Gender Recognition Panel (GRP). In these circumstances, breach of privacy by any club official could amount to a criminal offence. The GRC confers on transsexual people their post-transition gender status 'for all purposes'. It may be considered to be harassment, to ask if a person has a GRC, so it is advisable to extend the same level of protection and privacy to all those who have changed their gender role on a permanent basis.

The privacy of the wider group of transgender people, as well as transsexual people, is also protected under the Data Protection Act 1998, which means that any processing of their data should seek to avoid causing any damage or distress.

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 is wide ranging in its protections. Article 8 particularly, protects the right of individuals to have their private lives respected, and to be treated with dignity. Article 14 ensures that this and the other rights and freedoms contained in the Act, are enjoyed without discrimination.

APPENDIX 3: IOC Statement

The IOC position on athletes who have changed their gender status is very clear as explained in their Statement of the Stockholm consensus on sex reassignment in sport May 2004.

The group confirms the previous recommendation that any “individuals undergoing sex reassignment of male to female before puberty should be regarded as girls and women” (female). This also applies to individuals undergoing female to male reassignment, who should be regarded as boys and men (male).

The group recommends that individuals undergoing sex reassignment from male to female after puberty (and vice versa) be eligible for participation in female or male competitions, respectively, under the following conditions:

- Surgical anatomical changes have been completed, including external genitalia changes and gonadectomy
- Legal recognition of their assigned sex has been conferred by the appropriate official authorities
- Hormone therapy appropriate for the assigned sex has been administered in a verifiable manner and for a sufficient length of time to minimise gender-related advantages in sport competitions.

In the opinion of the group, eligibility should begin no sooner than two years after gonadectomy.

It is understood that a confidential case-by-case evaluation will occur. In the event that the gender of a competing athlete is questioned, the medical delegate (or equivalent) of the relevant sporting body shall have the authority to take all appropriate measures for the determination of the gender of a competitor.

APPENDIX 4: Sport Council Advisory Documents

Transsexual People and Competitive Sport – Guidance for National Governing Bodies of Sport
<http://www.equalityinsport.org/download?id=1155>

Transsexual People – Eligibility to Compete in International Competition
<http://www.equalityinsport.org/download?id=1143>

Transsexual People - Eligibility to compete in Domestic Competition
<http://www.equalityinsport.org/download?id=1142>

Transgender and Intersex Sports Provision at the University of Cambridge
<http://www.equalityinsport.org/download?id=913>