

**Gendered
Intelligence**

**Position Statement:
Trans and Non-Binary
Inclusion in Sport**

January 2025

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The headline points of Gendered Intelligence's position on trans and non-binary inclusion in sport are set out below. Please note these are summary points, and by no means a full statement of our nuanced position on the subject.

There is considerable expansion on these points and themes in the following Gendered Intelligence (GI) documents:

- **Including Trans and Non-binary People in Grassroots Sport**
<https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/services/111-resources-to-support-trans-and-non-binary-inclusion-in-sport>
- **Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion in Elite Sport: Key Questions, Considerations and Framework**
[Available to National Governing Bodies and similar policy-setting organisations on request]
- **Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport and Physical Activity** – GI's research report contains a wealth of information on TNB people's lived experiences in sport which underpins a number of the points we make.
<https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/services/111-resources-to-support-trans-and-non-binary-inclusion-in-sport>

Overarching Points - General

- **Sport is for all.** Everyone should have the possibility of playing sport and enjoying all the many benefits it brings, including creating and maintaining both physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- **Sports should start from the basis of inclusion,** creating a fun, safe and welcoming environment for everyone.
- **Sports should reduce barriers.** Every sport should be pro-active in reducing barriers to access for all under-represented and marginalised groups.
- **Sports should be especially mindful of young people.** Young people's experiences are formative. Engagement with sport begun at a young age often sets people up for a lifetime of positive physical and social activity. Poor experiences / exclusion when young can put people off for decades, or for life.

Overarching Points – Trans and non-binary (TNB) People

- **TNB people are under-represented in sport at every level.** TNB people experience many barriers to participation in sport and should be supported, enabled and encouraged, just like every other under-represented group.
- **It is not only possible, but valuable, to include TNB people in sport.**
- **TNB inclusion is an opportunity.** Working to include TNB people should be regarded as an opportunity to ask new questions, to examine practices we rarely think about, to engage in critical thinking, and to improve sport for everyone.
- **Sports should consider the full range of TNB-spectrum experiences.**

Whilst the vast majority of discussion currently revolves around the inclusion of trans women in women's sport, it is important for every sport to consider the full range of TNB-spectrum experiences around sex and gender. This includes:

- Trans women
 - Trans men
 - Non-binary people, both AMAB (Assigned Male at Birth) and AFAB (Assigned Female at Birth)
 - Gender fluid people
 - Agender people
 - Young trans, non-binary, gender fluid and/or agender people
 - People who have used medical intervention such as puberty suppressing hormones, gender affirming hormones etc, and those who haven't
- **TNB people shouldn't have to choose between playing sport and being themselves.**
 - **Policy and practice should allow for TNB participation at all levels, and should set standards for TNB inclusivity in wider sporting settings.** When establishing policy for participation / play, it is essential to separate elite sport from grassroots sport (see below). Such policy should be legally compliant, grounded in human rights principles and based on relevant, reliable evidence, so that it promotes inclusion, safety and fairness.
 - **Inclusion and fairness are intertwined concepts that should not be set against each other in a false dichotomy.** The inclusion of TNB people and the pursuit of fairness are not mutually exclusive. Neither are TNB inclusion and safety. Fairness and safety in sport are important for everyone. Neither is absolute, and both are contextual. We believe the questions opened up when thinking through TNB inclusion represent an opportunity to enhance both safety and fairness for everyone.

- **Stereotypes about TNB people have no place in decision making about inclusion.** Stereotypes and outliers should not dictate inclusion practices for the vast majority. Nor should uninformed public opinion which is typically based on such stereotypes and outliers.
- **The principles of the current IoC Framework are reasonable and workable.** These are grounded in human rights and set out themes of inclusion, prevention of harm, non-discrimination, fairness, no presumption of advantage, an evidence-based approach, health and bodily autonomy, a stakeholder-centred approach, and right to privacy. The notion of 'disproportionate advantage' is a reasonable and useful concept in establishing eligibility.
- **We recognise that in some sports and at some levels, some TNB people may be found to have a disproportionate advantage and may not be able to participate.** We expect this to be the exception, not the rule, and considered case by case.
- **Policy for TNB inclusivity should always be reviewed for impact on the intersex community** (and vice versa). Whilst TNB and intersex experiences are different, they may be intersectional, and policies which affect one group often affect the other.
- **All sports need to consider current and future models.** Sports should identify how to include TNB people in current binary models and also consider how the sport can evolve to be inclusive for all in the future.
- **All sports should actively address harassment and bullying of TNB people.** Trans women in particular are frequently targeted both on a collective and an individual basis.
- **All sports should stand up against transphobia.**

Grassroots / Recreational Levels

- **Start from an assumption of inclusion.** At grassroots level, where sport accommodates enormous diversity of all kinds, TNB people can and should be included in whichever team or category best accords with their gender identity in all but the most exceptional circumstances.
- **Ensure a good 'fit'.** The emphasis should be on performance-related 'fit' to a particular league or team or division, just as it is for everyone, in order to offer meaningful and safe competition.
- **Use a Disparity Policy to deal with exceptional circumstances.** Exceptional circumstances should broadly relate to all people, whether trans or cis, and are most likely to be safety-related (for example, limits around how big and heavy someone can be in a particular team). This can be handled via an appropriate disparity policy that applies to all.

Elite / Professional Level

- **At elite level, where marginal differences potentially have large impact on success / reward, the approach needs to be sport-specific** (and sometimes discipline-specific). It should be recognised that sports vary considerably, e.g. from team to individual; non-contact to collision; strategy/tactics dominant to speed/power dominant, and the best approach to elite-level TNB inclusion is therefore likely to vary too.
- **It is vital to ask the right questions.** GI does not claim to have all the answers to elite-level TNB inclusion - we believe no-one does as yet. However, without good questions, we will not get good answers. At this point in time, sports are consistently failing to ask good questions.
- **Inclusion should be the default starting position. No-one should be excluded without clear, relevant evidence that such exclusion is necessary.** Simply winning does not constitute such evidence. Nor does data based on cis people. Overall, current data is insufficient and flawed. Criteria should be based on performance data, not proxies. We will not get the data we need by preventing the very thing we need to gather data on – the actual performance of TNB people in sport.

Sport can be amazing and brilliant; it can enhance people's lives.
Sport can truly be for all.

This is the opportunity to do better – for everyone.

Gendered Intelligence, 2024

Gendered Intelligence: Expanding understandings of gender and improving trans lives

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