



The Football Association  
**Policy on Trans People in Football**  
POLICY DOCUMENT



# The Football Association Policy on Trans People in Football

## 1. Introduction

Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by, anyone who wants to participate in it. The Football Association (The FA) regulates the participation of competitors in football matches and domestic competitions as set out in The Rules of The Football Association (The FA Rules).

It is The FA's firm view that gender identity should not be a barrier to participation in football. The FA is intent on making football a lifelong experience, and ensuring the inclusion and safety of participants.

The FA has produced this policy to set out its position on transgender and transsexual people playing football.

## 2. Background

Participating in sport and in our case football has physical, psychological and social benefits and The FA is committed to promoting Football for Everyone.

- 2.1 The FA has undertaken a review of its 2007 Policy, which adopted the International Olympic Committee's position on transgender athletes as set out in the Stockholm Statement of May 2004.
- 2.2 The FA has given careful consideration to the Sports Council Equality Group "Guidance for National Governing Bodies of Sport" on "Transsexual People and Competitive Sport" and is pleased to adopt its recommendations to provide an inclusive environment which is supportive of and welcoming to trans people in football. As part of its review The FA has also sought the input and guidance of a specialist trans organisation.
- 2.3 The FA's policy is based on the fact that during the growth period, leading up to puberty, there is little difference in male and female strength development. Mixed football is allowed until the U18 age group and under 18's are entitled to play in boys' or girls' teams regardless of their birth sex.
- 2.4 However, hormonal changes brought about by puberty may result in:
  - a. **safety issues**, due to a general distinction between males and females in sport as a result of different muscle strength caused by testosterone; and
  - b. **fair play issues**, due potentially to differences between the sexes, and the fact that oestrogen and testosterone which is often taken as part of an individual's gender reassignment, can also have physical effects which may lead to competitive advantage.
- 2.5 For this reason, it is necessary to have in place a fair and considered policy to allow participation for all in football, and ensure fair competition and the safety of all those on the field.
- 2.6 This policy governs participation in domestic football and competitions governed by The FA. It does not govern
  - 1) participation in any football or domestic competitions that are not governed by The FA; or

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- 2) international football; or
- 3) international competitions governed by Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) or Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) or the International Olympics Committee (IOC)

and references to “football” throughout this policy should be understood in this context.

### 3. Gender within football

Football is a gender affected sport of a competitive nature where the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one sex could put them at a disadvantage compared to average persons of the other sex as competitors in a football match.

English law provides that because of this, separate sporting competitions can be organised for men and women. For children, the position is slightly different and further details are set out below. The general position is that the participation of trans people in competitive sports cannot be restricted unless it is strictly necessary to pursue a legitimate aim, namely securing fair competition and safety of other competitors.

From the start of the 2014-15 season, FA Rule C4(A)(v) on mixed football provides that a child in the age ranges from Under 7 to Under 18 may play in a match involving boys and girls. Taking into account the age and stage of development of children who are likely to be competitors, FA Rule J(3) provides that players in a match outside of these age ranges must be of the same gender.

### 4. What does gender reassignment mean?

Under the **Equality Act 2010**, a person has the characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning that person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

A reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the characteristic of gender reassignment.

The reassignment of a person’s gender may include undergoing medical gender reassignment treatments. However, it is not necessary for somebody to have undergone medical treatment in order to have the characteristic of gender reassignment. A transsexual person may or may not be proposing to undergo, be in the process of undergoing, or have completed a reassignment of their sex. Gender reassignment is a personal process (that is, moving away from one’s birth sex to the preferred/affirmed gender), rather than a medical process.

Gender reassignment is one of 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and as such transsexual people are protected against discrimination.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 also makes clear that the trans status of a person is confidential.

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## 5. The FA's policy

The FA's policy on trans people wishing to play football in their affirmed gender is as follows:

### Under 18

1. Pursuant to FA Rule C4(A)(xiii) on mixed football, any person playing football in the age ranges Under 7 to Under 18 may play in a match involving boys and girls, without restriction. There are therefore no conditions regarding any individual playing in a match under their reassigned/affirmed gender in these age ranges.

### 18 and over players (Adult players)

2. Pursuant to FA Rule J3 on mixed football, any players playing in an age range above the Under 18 age range must be of the same gender.
3. However, an individual may be eligible for participation in their affirmed gender. This will be subject to the approval of The FA on a case by case basis; how The FA reviews an application is set out below.
4. In reaching a decision, The FA will have regard to the following two factors:
  - (1) the safety of the applicant and fellow players, and
  - (2) the need to ensure fair play and fair competition.
5. When considering a trans player's application, The FA will make a presumption that an individual's application will be approved if he or she is able to satisfy the hormone-based requirements and provide the evidence set out below. If these requirements are met, The FA will only refuse an application if The FA decides in its absolute discretion that it is necessary to refuse an application to ensure (1) the applicant's and fellow players' safety and/or (2) fair competition.

Requirement	Evidence
<b>Transsexual male (female-to-male transsexual person)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hormone therapy results in blood testosterone levels within natal male range</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual case-by-case review</li> <li>• Medical information/records demonstrate hormone therapy administered in a verifiable manner</li> <li>• Blood testosterone within range for an appropriate length of time so as to minimise any potential advantage</li> <li>• Hormone treatment to be verified annually</li> <li>• Proof of ID required is identical to that required of all players i.e. passport or driving licence.</li> </ul>
<b>Transsexual female (male-to-female transsexual person)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hormone therapy</b></li> <li>OR</li> <li>• <b>Gonadectomy results in blood testosterone within natal female range</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual case-by-case review</li> <li>• Medical information/records demonstrate hormone therapy administered in a verifiable manner</li> <li>• Blood testosterone within natal female range for an appropriate length of time so as to minimise any potential advantage</li> <li>• Hormone treatment to be verified annually</li> <li>• Proof of ID required is identical to that required of all players i.e. passport or driving licence.</li> </ul>

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6. If a trans person has not undergone or is not undergoing hormone therapy or gonadectomy, The FA will consider their application taking into consideration the two requirements to ensure (1) the applicant's and fellow players' safety and (2) fair competition.

### **How The FA reviews applications:**

7. All applications for for an Adult player to play in their affirmed gender must be passed to The FA's Equality Manager. The FA's Equality Manager will then notify the Head of Medical Services, who may pass on the request within The FA's Medical Services team as appropriate and/or (in both cases) a medical representative appointed by The FA. All personal and sensitive information will be handled sensitively and confidentially in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and The FA policies (if any) regarding such data.
8. In order to progress applications, any individual wishing to play in their affirmed gender will be asked to permit their GP and/ or Consultant to disclose relevant medical information to The FA (including such information, records or other material as The FA may require from time to time) and to permit The FA's Equality Manager to liaise with their GP and/or Consultant as necessary.
9. In order to determine whether an individual can be approved to play football in their affirmed gender, The FA's Equality Manager, Head of Medical Services, relevant members of The FA's Medical Services team and/or any medical representative appointed by The FA will consider the evidence on a case by case basis.
10. The FA will work in confidence with players who have been approved to play in their affirmed gender and each player's clearance, in particular any hormone-related treatment, may continue to be reviewed every year, to ensure its continued validity. The FA will also work with The FA Registration team to register players affected by the policy to ensure registration takes into account the club the person is assigned to and their gender. The history of the applicants gender affected by this policy is not disclosed. This is because there will be some people living in their affirmed gender who, if hormone treatment ceases, will continue to produce hormones as a result of their birth sex that affect their strength or stamina. The FA may withdraw its clearance in such an instance.
11. A person shall not be entitled to play football matches in their affirmed gender pursuant to FA Rule J3 until such time as they have been provided with written clearance by The FA.
12. Any individual applying for clearance to play football in their affirmed gender may appeal against The FA's determination of their application. The appeals process is appended to this policy.



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### **If a player's gender is challenged**

13. In the event that the gender of a player is questioned, The FA will work with the individual to undertake a sensitive and confidential review of their circumstances and shall have the authority to take all appropriate measures for the determination of the gender of a competitor, if it considers that there are grounds to do so. The FA will only consider reasonable requests which are put formally in writing setting out clearly the grounds on which they are based.

For further information and guidance please contact:

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