

## 1. Introduction

**This briefing note replaces the previous one which was circulated last year.**

Glasgow Life wants to welcome everyone in to our facilities; equality of access is one of our core values.

We realise that transgender people may face some particular barriers when trying to access sports and leisure facilities. We want to work together with the trans community to create a safe environment and a culture of understanding and acceptability that ensures that trans people feel comfortable in our facilities and receive a high quality experience when engaging in sport and physical activity. This briefing addresses some of the issues that they may face and those that you are likely to come across in your day to day work within a sports venue.

## 2. Transgender Information

Transgender people, often referred to as trans people, live life in a gender that is different from that identified at their birth. Gender reassignment is the term used to describe transitioning from one gender to another. It may involve people wanting to change their body through hormone treatment, surgery or both. Being fit enough to undergo surgery is an issue for some trans people, so our support in helping them exercise can be really helpful. However, living in a preferred gender means different things to different people. Some people may choose to dress and live as their preferred gender – a social transition, which means not undergoing any medical changes.

Their **preferred chosen gender** is what is important to trans people and in implementing this guidance.

## 3. Attitude

A welcoming smile, a respectful attitude and a friendly face that encourages people to feel confident in asking questions is key to making our customers feel welcome within Glasgow Life facilities. It is simply good customer service.

Address people appropriately – in the gender in which they are presenting. If you are unsure of their gender, then simply use gender neutral language, or if it becomes necessary, you should simply ask respectfully. If required, please ask customers how you can be of assistance to them.

Take the time to read Appendix 1 to develop greater understanding.

## 4. Changing Facilities

The Equality Act (2010) which is the current legislation in relation to equalities both in the UK and Scotland protects the rights of transgender people. Under this legislation, trans people can use changing and showering facilities appropriate to their **chosen** gender, even when they may not have completed their gender reassignment or have opted for a social transition.

However, many trans people will feel uncomfortable or unconfident due to body issues if they are undergoing hormone therapy and surgical procedures. They may wear special clothes or binding, or just loose tops and shorts.

Changing villages are suitable for transgender people because they are unisex, but if your venue has only the option of male or female changing rooms and showering facilities, then you need to identify a room where someone who feels uncomfortable in either changing room can be accommodated should they ask.

## **5. Single Sex leisure Provision**

The person is entitled to participate in single sex sessions and cannot be excluded from participation of their chosen gender. They may not look like the gender which they have chosen although they may wear clothes associated with it.

## **6. Transgender Only Provision**

In some instances, Glasgow Life may provide leisure activities solely for trans people. This is helpful for those who do not have the confidence to access mainstream services, or as a “stepping stone” to mainstream provision in the future. As only transgender people will be attending, you may find that they are more comfortable and may opt to not cover up to the same degree as they might otherwise do in a session with the general public. You may see people in different stages of transition and some may display what we understand as male and female characteristics.

## **7. Customer Complaints**

Some customers may complain if they feel that someone whom they think of being of the opposite sex is in their changing room. This is understandable and it requires sensitive explanation of transgender, the law – the Equality Act (2010), and of our policy of trying to facilitate equal access within our venues. Customers can be directed to the Policy and Research Team on the contact number below if they want to know more or are still unhappy with the explanation.

## **8. Reporting of Incidents**

Please use the Hate Crime Reporting Incident protocol to report incidences of violence or abuse against transgender customers or staff. This is different from the general venue Incident Reporting Form. See the link below:

<http://glintranet/supportservices/policy-research-development/policy-development/equalities/anti-harassment-procedures/Documents/Hate%20Crime%20Incident%20Log%20Pro-Forma.doc>

## **9. Participation in Competition**

### **9.1 Formal Competition**

The UK Gender Recognition Act, 2004 (S.19) states that when a person has obtained a gender recognition certificate, issued on completion of gender reassignment, sports bodies can only prohibit transgender people on an individual basis from competition if the sport is a gender affected one, and the prohibition is on the grounds of fair competition or safety of competitors. In other words, we will treat a transgender person as belonging to the sex in which they present (as opposed to the physical sex they were born with) unless there is evidence that they have an unfair advantage or there would be a risk to the safety of competitors, which might occur in some close contact sports.

## **9.2 Recreational Competition**

Glasgow Life should not apply these strict standards to informal recreational competition. We should be flexible and encourage participation in the trans person's chosen gender in the spirit of our equality of access values.

### **Summary of Guidance**

- Be helpful and welcoming in your attitude to transpeople
- Know where the designated alternative changing space in your venue is and ensure that any temporary staff know this too
- Know that the law as well as Glasgow Life's policy on equal access ensures that trans people can:
  - a) participate in single sex leisure provision of their **chosen** gender
  - b) use changing rooms of their **chosen** gender
    - no matter if they look as if they are of the opposite sex
- Use the Hate Crime Reporting Form for any incidents – remember that this applies to transgender staff as well as customers

Adhere to the formal competition guidelines for transgender participation for formal competitions **only** – allow competition in the **chosen** gender for any recreational sport

### **Acknowledgements and Further Information**

We would like to thank LEAP Sports who have been extremely helpful in revising this guidance.

Please contact Helen Maclean for further information on 287 8951, e-mail [helen.maclean@glasgowlife.org.uk](mailto:helen.maclean@glasgowlife.org.uk), or helen.maclean (Glasgow Life) on the internal mail system.

The Policy and Research Team are always keen to take feedback on the format and content of briefing papers. If you have any comments on improvement, please get in touch via the contact information above.

Further information can be accessed from the web links below:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/EqualRightsRespect/worksheet30-equality\\_act\\_2010\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/EqualRightsRespect/worksheet30-equality_act_2010_factsheet.pdf)

<http://www.equalityinsport.org/equality-groups/gender-reassignment/publications/>

## **Appendix 1**

Nowadays many people use the term 'transgender' as an umbrella term (as we do in this guidance). An alternative word is 'trans'. Some prefer the use of 'trans' as it avoids ambiguity and recognises the original distinct meaning of 'transgender'.

Transgender (or trans) is an umbrella term, which covers people whose gender identity and gender expression differ from the gender they were labelled with at birth. A person's gender identity is their self-perception of their gender, whilst gender expression is a person's external gender-related appearance and behaviour. The groups covered by the term transgender are:

- Transsexual women (people labelled male at birth, but who have a female gender identity and are transitioning to live completely and permanently as women);
- Transsexual men (who are labelled female at birth, but have a male gender identity and are transitioning to live completely and permanently as men);
- Intersex people (people whose internal / external reproductive organs or chromosomes are in-between what is considered to be male and female);
- Androgyne and polygender people (who do not feel comfortable being described as male or female, but may describe their gender as being a mixture of male and female aspects, or may reject defining their gender at all); and
- Cross-dressing people (who cross-dress because they feel more comfortable expressing themselves in particular feminine or masculine clothing).

There is a lack of agreement between people as to which terms they prefer. Therefore the safest practice is always to ask someone which way they would prefer to be described.

It is advisable to only ever use these terms as adjectives. Calling someone 'a transsexual' is often considered to be as rude as calling someone 'a black'. Similarly it is considered best practice to refer to 'a transgender person' rather than 'a transgendered person'.

Regardless of how far a transgender person's transition has progressed it is always considered polite and respectful to use terms that acknowledge their identity as a man or woman. Thus a transsexual person who is transitioning from a former male role to a female one would usually wish to be referred to as 'she' or 'her' and for people to refer to her as a woman. The same applies in reverse to trans men (going from female to male).

Transgender people are therefore quite clearly diverse. People perceive and express their gender identity in different ways. The experience of discrimination, transphobic harassment, anti-social behaviour and a lack understanding of transsexual issues is common to all transgender people though.

Transgender people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically. Known as gender reassignment or transition this is usually a complex process that takes place over a long period of time.

The Equality Act (2010) contains protections for people who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment. It is good practice for the purpose of accessing facilities to consider a transgender person to have changed their gender at the time of their choosing. Many people will change their name, and many will also apply for and receive a gender recognition certificate.