



Greater Manchester
Moving > ^ < v

TRANS AND NON-BINARY INCLUSION IN SPORT, MOVEMENT AND EXERCISE: A GUIDE FOR SPORT AND LEISURE ORGANISATIONS

Published October 2025

LGBT Foundation
Fairbairn House (2nd Floor), 72 Sackville Street,
Manchester, M1 3NJ

LGBT Foundation © 2025
Registered Charity No. 1070904
Registered Company No. 03476576

03	Foreword	24	Recommendations	38	Staff Training
05	Introduction	25	Inclusive Policies	39	Addendum 1: Intersectional Inclusion
06	Headline Findings	26	Terms of Reference	40	Addendum 2: Implications of the 2025 Supreme Court Ruling on Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion
07	How to use this guide	27	Competitive fairness	42	Addendum 3: Trans Exclusionary Policies at a National Governing Body Level
08	Methodology	28	Clear dress expectations	42	Glossary of terms
10	Survey and focus group themes	30	Conscious Design	48	Further reading
10	Individuals	30	Gender neutral facilities	48	Sources used
11	Barriers to participation	32	What if gender neutral facilities are not an option?		
16	Transition related barriers	33	Facilitation		
19	Impact of discrimination	34	Trans specific classes		
21	Organisations	35	Diversity in Membership		
21	Barriers to participation – the view of organisations	35	Demographic Monitoring		
		37	Inclusive Advertising		

This guidance has been produced by LGBT Foundation in collaboration with Greater Manchester (GM) Moving between September 2024 and May 2025. It is not intended as legal advice, and is provided for reference only.

CONTENTS



LGBT Foundation has been proud to partner with GM Moving to deliver this guidance, which will support and encourage trans and non-binary inclusion in sports, movement and exercise.

It is vitally important that all organisations stand with their trans and non-binary people and communities, at a time in which trans exclusion is all too common. We hope this guide will illustrate just how simple it is to implement inclusive, accessible, and friendly services.

We look forward to working with sport, leisure and a wide range of organisations across Greater Manchester to make their services and activities more accessible for all LGBTQ+ people, so that everyone in our communities can benefit from the joy, excitement, and camaraderie that movement, physical activity and sport can provide.

- Dr Paul Martin OBE, Chief Executive at LGBT Foundation, July 2025

FOREWORD



Greater Manchester Moving exists to change lives through movement, physical activity, and sport. Research into physical activity levels amongst trans and non-binary people shows that these groups face significant, systemic barriers to engagement in movement, physical activity, and sport. This led us to working with LGBT Foundation to learn more about what can help and what barriers can stop trans people from moving more.

Our partnership has led to this research-backed guide on trans and non-binary inclusion in sport, physical activity and movement. This guide is an invaluable look into trans and non-binary people's experiences of movement, physical activity and sport. It also provides great examples of how sports and leisure organisations are supporting trans and non-binary inclusion in their facilities and activities, and offers recommendations

for things that people can practically do to make their opportunities and places more welcoming and inclusive.

We're incredibly proud of this guidance and hope it's used far and wide to promote inclusion of trans and non-binary people and communities to support our shared mission across Greater Manchester: Active Lives for All.

*- Hayley Lever, CEO, GM Moving,
September 2025*

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

This guide, produced in partnership with GM Moving and LGBT Foundation, is intended to support sport and leisure organisations in Greater Manchester to include trans and non-binary people within their services, activities and facilities.

It has been co-produced with trans and non-binary people, and leisure organisations across Greater Manchester, to ascertain the experiences and needs of communities who are can often face barriers to participating in sport, movement and exercise.

This guidance will support your organisation to choose inclusion, by evidencing the key barriers to trans and non-binary participation in Greater Manchester, and providing best practice tips to encourage communities to engage with your services.

We use 'organisation' throughout this guide. Organisation in this context refers to any publicly or privately run leisure organisation (such as a leisure centre, gym, swimming pool etc, sport hall etc), sport club (focusing on grassroots and amateur teams), or exercise class/group.

We use 'client' throughout to refer to people that use an organisation's service.

Please note: This research was conducted prior to the Supreme Court ruling in *For Women Scotland v Scottish Ministers*, and therefore does not reflect this change in its survey findings. The implications of the Supreme Court ruling are addressed in **Addendum 2: Implications of the 2025 Supreme Court Ruling on Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion**.



HEADLINE FINDINGS

- Over a third of trans and non-binary people surveyed want to go swimming, and a quarter want to use their local gym, but cannot due to inaccessible facilities and discrimination.
- Two in five trans and non-binary people told us that exercise is important for affirming their gender identity.
- A third of trans and non-binary surveyed people stopped exercising after transitioning.
- Just under half of trans and non-binary people surveyed faced discrimination when accessing a movement, exercise or sport activity.
- Three quarters of those surveyed avoided sport, movement and exercise completely, due to the fear of discrimination.
- Of the eight participating sport and leisure organisations, three do not collect any demographic information about their participants.
- Seven of eight organisations provide inclusion training for staff, but only half include specific information about trans and non-binary inclusion.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

If you have 5 minutes

Read and review the actions in the **Recommendations** section and consider signing up to GM Moving and LGBT Foundation's Trans and Non-binary Inclusion in Sport, Movement and Exercise Training Session.

If you have 10 minutes

Read the Recommendations section in full and consider how you might apply these in your organisation. Consider signing up to **GM Moving and LGBT Foundation's Trans and Non-binary Inclusion in Sport, Movement and Exercise Training Session.**

If you have 30 minutes

Read the entire document and discuss with your team how you might implement its findings to make your organisation more trans and non-binary inclusive. Consider signing up to **GM Moving and LGBT Foundation's Trans and Non-binary Inclusion in Sport, Movement and Exercise Training Session.**



METHODOLOGY

LGBT Foundation conducted a survey between August and October 2024, which was shared on LGBT Foundation's social media pages and newsletter. To be eligible to participate, respondents needed to be:

- Over the age of 18
- Living or working in Greater Manchester
- Trans and/or non-binary, and/or working for a leisure organisation operating in Greater Manchester

The survey asked individuals about their experiences of sport, movement and exercise, and the barriers to participation they faced. If participants were representing an organisation, the survey asked them about the training they had received, their understanding of the law, and where they felt more resources were needed to support trans and non-binary inclusion within their organisation.

The survey received 64 responses, 56 from individuals and 8 from organisations.

The survey asked participants if they were interested in attending a focus group to discuss their answers in more depth. Using this pool for recruitment, LGBT Foundation spoke to a further 5 trans and non-binary people, and 7 representatives from sport and leisure organisations.

For individuals, a majority (80%) of participants were between the ages of 25-45. 21% were trans men/masculine, 25% were trans women/feminine, and 40% were non-binary, with the remainder describing their gender identity in another way.

90% of participants stated their ethnicity as 'white British', 'white Irish' or 'any other white background'. This was noted as a significant limitation of the survey and focus groups, and is reflective of LGBT Foundation's limited reach in non-white communities of identity. Further work should specifically examine the experiences of trans and non-binary People of Colour in sport, movement and exercise.



METHODOLOGY

80% of those surveyed also disclosed having a disability. This included:

- ADHD (67%)
- Anxiety (67%)
- Autism (58%),
- A mental health condition (such as depression, schizophrenia etc) (46%)
- Chronic pain (32%)
- Wheelchair user (some or all of the time) or mobility or movement disability (e.g. use a walking stick, need to sit down when waiting in a queue) (15%)
- D/deaf, hearing impaired, or Hard of Hearing (11%)
- Blind or partially sighted (4%)

A majority also disclosed having 2 or more disabilities (72%).

The prevalence of disabilities amongst those surveyed highlights the need for intersectionality in facility design when adapting spaces to be trans and non-binary inclusive.

In terms of organisations, representatives of community leisure, sport governing bodies, and sport teams responded to the survey. A majority were national organisations with field offices in Greater Manchester, with others working in Rochdale, Salford, Stockport and Manchester. Most organisations were large, with over 50 members of staff, and most had participated in some form of inclusion training that specifically discussed LGBTQ+ inequalities.



SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Individuals

56 individuals responded to the survey, with a further 5 attending a focus group to talk about their experiences in depth. Participants were involved in a number of different sport, exercise and movement activities, including:

- Aerial hoop / dance
- Aqua-Zumba
- Badminton
- Climbing / bouldering
- Cricket
- Cycling
- Football
- Gym
- HIIT
- Kayaking
- Pilates
- Pole dance / fitness
- Running
- Softball
- Spin class
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Trampolining
- Walking
- Weight training
- Yoga

Of these activities, walking, going to the gym, yoga and football were the most popular.

36% of respondents wanted to access swimming facilities, and 25% wanted to use the gym, but were unable to, largely due to a lack of trans inclusive facilities.

Nearly all agreed that movement, exercise and sport were important for both mental wellbeing and physical health, with 41% adding that these opportunities were also important for affirming their gender identity.

For some, increases in muscle mass as a result of exercise can result in physically desirable changes, that provide a more masculine or feminine figure. These changes can be an important part of social transition, particularly if medical interventions such as hormones are unobtainable or unwanted.

63% of survey participants reported engaging in a movement, exercise or sport activity for 3 or more days in the previous week, compared to 13% who took part in none.

Those who had not participated in the week prior were more likely to live outside of Manchester, Salford or Trafford, more likely to be unemployed, and much more likely to be disabled.



SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Barriers to participation

Injuries

30% of survey respondents used to participate in movement, exercise or sport activities, but no longer do so. A number of reasons were given for this; many spoke of injuries or disabilities that prevented them from continuing their participation:

"I used to do gymnastics (but I) had to stop due to an injury that was not repairable enough to go back."

"My chronic pain and POTs make it difficult to exercise as much as I'd like"

For some respondents, the impacts of Covid and Long Covid affected their ability to exercise.

"I don't really have time of energy for (exercise) now, thanks to Covid."

"(I) fear judgement from my excessive sweating from long COVID."

Some also acknowledged that injuries were likely to impact their ability to play sport for a long time, given the lengthy wait for NHS care;

"Fear of tearing my ACL again prevents me from trying a lot of new sport. Particularly with current NHS surgery waiting lists, recovery from the injury could take +3 years."



SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Financial barriers

Others spoke of financial constraints, with 66% citing cost as a barrier to participation. This included the cost of activity classes and participation, as well as the cost of public transport, fuel and parking.

"I won a 12-week gym challenge at a trans friendly gym but couldn't afford to carry on with it. It wasn't local to me either so despite the course itself being free it still cost £15 on bus tickets a week to attend 3 sessions. There was no way I could afford an actual membership on top of all that travel sadly."

"I won a 12-week gym challenge at a trans friendly gym but couldn't afford to carry on with it. It wasn't local to me either so despite the course itself being free it still cost £15 on bus tickets a week to attend 3 sessions. There was no way I could afford an actual membership on top of all that travel sadly."

"There are lots of sport and activities I'd like to do, but costs (training especially) is prohibitive."

Some spoke of travelling further, and taking on increasing costs, in order to access a facility that had mixed gender changing rooms.

Walking and yoga were identified as two of the most popular ways to exercise, due in part to the ability of participants to do both of these activities alone in their home or neighbourhood, without the need for equipment. They therefore have a low-cost barrier to entry.

Time

Activities being scheduled at inaccessible times was reported by some as an issue, particularly those working unsociable hours within the nighttime economy, or those with children or childcare responsibilities. 39% reported work commitments as a significant barrier.

Additionally, reliance on public transport, aside from cost, was felt to pose risks of discrimination due to being visibly queer or gender non-conforming.



SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Difficulty finding inclusive spaces

Many found it difficult to find a safe space with inclusive options for trans and non-binary people. Some spoke of a lack of resources to identify friendly and inclusive options, even within LGBTQ+ specific spaces.

"I used to swim a lot but since leaving school and coming out as trans I've been cautious to pick it back up as I'm not sure which pools are trans friendly."

"(The) majority of (inclusive) teams are solely for gay men or women."

"There are not enough of us in the outer boroughs to be able to Google whether other trans folks have had good or bad experiences at certain spaces. You are often the first "freak" going into the space who has to endure the obvious panic in the faces of facilitators and desperate blundering with language of other attendees. Why would trans people want to put themselves through that by choice?"

Intersectionality of identity compounded these issues. Some respondents felt that even trans and non-binary specific spaces were inaccessible to them due to their age. Others highlighted disabilities that were not accommodated, with 25% reporting that inaccessible facilities prevented them from participating.

"A lot of sport on offer don't really have a disabled friendly option for me. A lot of places simply aren't willing to accommodate. For example, my local pool said I couldn't swim with a pool noodle under my armpits as lifeguards need to know I can swim. I can swim just fine!! I've swum up to 2k which is a mighty distance. I just can't move my shoulder as it will dislocate and I'll end up in hospital. After the pool said that I just cried and couldn't face asking anywhere else."

"Living with my injury, (I was) grieving what I could no longer do, I didn't realise that the focus could be on what you can do. I missed skating and roller derby, no one thought about what would give me a similar feeling. I discovered scooters, which replicated the feeling that I missed. I wondered if some of the disability inclusion stuff is about replicating feelings and sensations in different ways. Having curiosity about what difference experiences you can do, rather than prescribing activities. We need to have space to play."

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity specifically was mentioned by many, with some highlighting the need for more low sensory and LGBTQ+ inclusive options.

“(My) ADHD and autism (mean I) can struggle with the social side of sport teams and sport groups. (I feel) pressure to socialise, but I want to focus on the sport. I find it hard not to feel anxious because I feel like I have to make excuses for not participating in the social events. It adds a little extra layer of challenge when comes to sport teams.”

There was also acknowledgment that neurodivergent folks are more likely to have additional physical disabilities, such as hypermobility¹, which is not always considered or able to be accommodated by instructors.

Given that trans and non-binary people are between three and six times more likely to be autistic or neurodivergent², disability inclusion is a key factor in ensuring facilities remain accessible for all.

1. ‘The Curious Connection Between Hypermobility and Neurodivergence’ – SEDSConnective: <https://www.sedsconnective.org/post/the-curious-connection-between-hypermobility-and-neurodivergence>

2. ‘Transgender and gender-diverse individuals are more likely to be autistic and report higher autistic traits’ – University of Cambridge: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/transgender-and-gender-diverse-individuals-are-more-likely-to-be-autistic-and-report-higher-autistic> Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D – Changing and Toilet Provision.

Some also spoke of the importance of communicating in a neurodivergent inclusive way.

“(There’s a) lack of understanding of how to safely deliver information to neurodivergent people.”

Child-friendly spaces

Issues finding appropriate childcare or child friendly spaces were noted, with facilities either being child friendly, or trans and non-binary inclusive, but not both.

“A lot of the (inclusive) activities ... are over 18s only; (they’re) not designed as spaces to bring your own children.”

“Hate crimes (against me) ... can be a risk to my child. (It’s a) minefield for parents to navigate, especially in two trans parent households. (It’s a) complete barrier to wanting to engage in exercise.”

Weight stigma

Weight stigma and fatphobia was additionally highlighted as a barrier.

“I am also nervous about... my weight in movement and exercise settings, and worried I will look obviously ‘out of place’.”

“Being fat - not all activities are considerate of my body.”

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Political sentiment

Many also spoke of being pushed out of their sport of choice by national governing bodies. For those playing in affiliated teams, this meant being asked not to return to the group, while even those in unaffiliated teams and spaces felt no longer welcome, due to the political climate such policies had created.

“My local team claimed (they were) following rules (by excluding) trans women from local sport competitions.”

“I’m scared to go to sport sessions because of growing anti trans attitudes about trans women’s participation in sport and the viral abuse trans women get who try to continue.”

“Concern with being welcomed into new sporting environments is definitely another barrier. Particularly with the recent increase in anti-trans inclusion in sport sentiment, I fear that being openly non-binary in new sporting spaces/clubs will lead to my eligibility to participate in competition being questioned.”

As a result of this, some felt (particularly respondents who were trans women), that they had to hide their gender identity and delay their transition in order to continue participating.

“The threat of discrimination due to my gender identity has ... an impact on my wellbeing. I’ve only come out to people in my club, and mainly just people in my specific cricket team. I’m worried that if I make my identity more well known amongst the club and the league, someone may report me to the ECB and ask that I’m banned from participating in women’s sport. ”

“It feels helpless in the UK now being a trans woman who wants to play sport... (it’s) impossible except on your own with existing friends... I used to play sport for my university and county and now feel there is no place even in local sporting teams for me.”

“I use she/they pronouns. From what I understand, cricket requires those identifying as non-binary to play in men’s teams. I do not want to do this, so I do not openly disclose my preferred pronouns (apart from a few close friends who only refer to me with she/her pronouns in a cricket setting).”

These policies also had the effect of confusing organisations responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004, with some reporting being asked to show a gender recognition certificate before being allowed to use the changing room of their affirmed gender.

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Transition related barriers

For some respondents, dysphoria as a result of their gender identity meant they could no longer participate in the activities that they had been prior to the beginning of their transition.

Transitioning had other consequences on their ability to participate in sport, movement and exercise. Knowing which changing rooms, bathrooms and shower facilities to use, the likelihood and potential severity of discrimination, and the policies of the organisation were cited as barriers.

"I'm becoming really uncertain about which changing facilities are safer for me. I would like to sign up for gym membership but filling in a form would mean outing or misgendering myself and I am uncertain about how staff will treat me."

For some, particularly non-binary folks, the gendering of gym facilities, with not only changing rooms but exercise classes being delineated by gender, presented an issue for participation. While some had been encouraged to join 'women and non-binary' inclusive sessions, for others, this was perceived as a misunderstanding of their gender identity as 'woman lite', and marked them out as an outsider, as they may be the only non-binary person present.

This was particularly the case for folks that were not assigned female at birth, or did not have an androgenous gender presentation.

"I felt that I had to suppress that part of me to conform to androgyny. I didn't participate in sport for a long time in fear of being called out for not being 'non-binary enough'."

There was a recognition that an individual's ability to participate was correlated with their ability to 'pass'.

"I don't pass well, so joining any group (that's) not explicitly trans friendly means I have the pressure of needing to out and explain myself from the get go."

"(I'm fearful) about being 'clocked' especially in changing spaces, toilets and showers. I'm anxious to change in gender-segregated facilities because I don't pass as a man but also feel uncomfortable changing in women's facilities."

"(I am) on hrt which has given me more facial hair and body hair so (I) don't pass as a woman but have not had top surgery so cannot pass as a man."

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

This ability to 'blend in' was complicated by the activity the individual was participating in;

"Some of the activity I would like to take part in (dancing, pole) is harder to find spaces that are accepting to people who look masculine / are read as men even if they don't identify that way."

"Sport is so heteronormative and gendered it hurts. At the gym it can feel like most women have long hair, make up, nails done and feminine workout gear etc. The men look like walking work-out adverts. I just feel so out of place."

"Before transitioning and early on in my transition, I felt more comfortable in exercise (and) sporting activities. As I enjoyed things that were traditionally more feminine, such as dance, pole, ballet, Zumba. Now I am read as male more often I feel more out of place in these spaces, and fear I will be read as predatory or creepy or judged more harshly."

Some spoke of being impacted by the physical aspects of transition. A number of trans men and masculine people discussed not being able to bind while exercising, which impacted their gender presentation, and therefore their perceived levels of safety and inclusion.

"You shouldn't bind when exercising, but of course (breasts) are a big gender mark against my actual identity - I don't pass well when not in a binder, let alone without."

"I am on HRT and started getting facial and body hair, and while I'm glad for it, it does make me fearful being so visibility trans with masc features alongside my (breasts)."

For those taking estrogen, some spoke of the impact that reduced testosterone had on their ability to participate, while others spoke of having their mobility affected by gender affirming surgeries. While these aspects of transition increased overall body confidence, they also changed the way participants can interact with movement and exercise.

A hidden cost was identified in needing to buy new sportswear, as it is often expensive, and choosing the correct sizes can be difficult if store changing rooms are not accessible. As having non specialist, ill-fitting or 'incorrect' athletic wear can impact self-esteem while exercising, draw unwanted attention, and extend the length of time needed in changing rooms, this seemingly small barrier can become significant.

"(I feel) insecure and lack ... knowledge around how to dress. (I've) ... outgrow(n) active clothes due to hormonal transition."

"I don't feel comfortable swimming in a pool because I can't wear a costume or anything that shows my body shape."

"Active wear also brought a lot of dysphoria to me, I didn't feel able to be myself in anything."

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

This can be exacerbated by policies that enforce certain dress codes for particular genders.

"(I) fear transphobia/transmisogyny because of the revealing nature of swimming costumes on trans women's bodies."

"I am self-conscious about top surgery scars as well as my weight (in swimwear)."

"Having more of my body on show i.e. when swimming and being visibly trans is uncomfortable at times."

Some felt like an outsider due to their gender identity. This was more common for non-binary people, some of whom felt that they consistently had to explain their identity, share their pronouns or commit to being misgendered by teammates. Some respondents worried about having to change their gender presentation in order to fit in.

"I've thought about going back but fear of the injury recurring and standing out as a non-binary person who doesn't shave in a sport that's quite feminine has put me off."

"I used to play netball, but it was difficult to find mixed-gender teams which I would feel welcome in as a trans person."

"I was at a running club in Wythenshawe ... I like the running, (but) hated having to deal with needing to explain my identity or commit to being read wrong."

However, some emphasised increased confidence and ability to participate due to their transition;

"Having gender affirming treatment has made it easier for me to take part in physical activity. It's more comfortable and enjoyable. The HRT has helped with muscle development at the gym."

"I feel somewhat more confident now I've changed my name and present more masculine. I think it will be easier for me to go to gyms or pools once I'm on HRT."

"I certainly go into sport spaces with my hackles up... but I never played football before transition. Arguably transitioning has helped me access sport spaces that work for me. It's an important part of my life."

Some also valued exercise as a means of losing weight for transition related surgeries.

Notably, nearly all those who reported increased confidence following transition were trans men or trans masculine. Trans women and trans feminine folks in general did not share this sense of increased confidence or ability to participate post transition.

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Impact of discrimination

41% of respondents reported experiencing discrimination when accessing a movement, exercise or sport activity. 73% reported avoiding sport, movement and exercise all together, due to the fear of potential discrimination.

This discrimination was experienced in a number of ways. Some faced discriminatory incidents from staff:

"The coach of another team started (misgendering me) and kicking off ... I was told the match was 'just for fun' and I shouldn't take it so seriously."

For others, fellow clients were a significant source of hostility;

"(In the) gym changing room, another customer told me I didn't belong there."

"I ... experience regular misgendering when playing sport, this usually comes from (my teammates)."

"Systemic sexism is something I've consistently experienced when playing in traditionally masculine sport (e.g., football, cricket)."

"I learned that some gay men were making transphobic comments ... despite not experiencing those comments directly, I felt somehow uncomfortable sharing that space with them."

Some spoke of the impact of bullying in sport at school, and that these experiences made them apprehensive to try activity classes as adults.

"Queerphobic school bullying in PE classes ... still has an impact."

"The outright bullying, plus the general sense that I didn't fit in at all with boys, meant that I really hated PE as a kid. This stuck with me well into adulthood, where I had a general dislike of 'sport'. But as time's gone on, I've luckily been able to start taking part in more activity, and realised I actually really love it!"

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Nearly all of those who had experienced discrimination in sport, movement and exercise reported significant impacts on their ability to continue participating.

“I kept playing but over time I it took its toll, I began dreading going to training and matches. I disengaged massively from all aspects of football eventually due to discrimination.”

“I stopped trying to find anywhere that was willing to accommodate me. It’s too much mental effort when my mood is already so low from gender dysphoria and disability.”

“(After experiencing discrimination) I chose not to participate, I’ve moved on, but it still bothers me.”

“I continue to participate as I have had far worse attitudes in the past, but I prefer to avoid classes or areas in which aggression is over a certain threshold.”

“(My) gender dysphoria heightened, (my) suicidal ideation increased (and my) depression worsened.”



SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Organisations

The organisations surveyed delivered several different activities. These included:

- Badminton
- Climbing
- Cricket
- Football
- Gym facilities
- Rugby
- Squash
- Swimming
- Tai chi
- Tennis
- Walking (including hill walking, and mountaineering)
- Yoga

Barriers to participation – the view of organisations

When asked about the barriers trans and non-binary people face in accessing movement, exercise and sport, there were a variety of responses.

Some spoke about a lack of visual representation of trans and non-binary athletes, or advertisements for facilities that did not include gender diverse people. This creates a lack of role models for trans and non-binary people looking to participate, with one organisation stating.

“If people don’t see (themselves) doing a sport, they might not feel it’s for them.”

Organisation representatives also felt that misinformation might have a role in preventing inclusion, suggesting that trans and non-binary people might assume they cannot participate in grassroots sport activities due to bans on participation in elite sport.

Representation raises the question of demographic monitoring. 38% of organisation surveyed reported not capturing any demographic information about their participants.

Of the organisations that did collect demographic information, 60% asked participants to disclose both sexuality and gender identity. 40% asked for neither.

During the focus group sessions, organisations disclosed that although many were capturing sexuality and gender identity data, they were unsure how to convert this into policy changes or use it to inform their activity schedules. Some wondered whether it was important to capture this data and felt that it would not be helpful to them.

There was consensus that the policy positions of national governing bodies had an impact on trans and non-binary inclusion, so much that even where inclusion is practised at a grassroots level, trans and non-binary participants may feel unwelcome or unsupported due to the wider policy context of the sport.

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

This in turn was felt to contribute to a lack of safe spaces for trans and non-binary participation. Organisations felt that they lacked inclusive exercise programmes for gender diverse people, and that where these were available, they were largely unknown within communities.

This is due in part to a reluctance to advertise trans and non-binary specific sessions on social media, for fear of backlash against an organisation or its staff.

Staff also felt that they were not well equipped to navigate the needs of others in relation to their trans and non-binary customers, particularly regarding swimming, single sex swimming sessions and appropriate swimwear policies. These difficulties contributed to a feeling that spaces were not safe for trans and non-binary participants.

“Swimming seems to be the biggest barrier; swimwear can be an issue with appropriateness around children and vulnerable adults.”

Organisations also felt that a lack of training and education for staff might contribute to venues feeling unwelcoming. Respondents expressed a need for support and guidance

in relation to the rights of trans and non-binary people and how these are balanced with the rights of others, how trans and non-binary people can be included in activities, and general education on affirming terminology and actions.

“There’s a lot of nerves... we worry about causing offence. If managers find it difficult, how do (we expect) front line staff expect to manage this?”

“The overall level of confidence amongst sport organisations is quite low. There are potentially tricky situations because you need to balance everyone’s views in different spaces, but this can be hard to navigate for leaders, when people are looking at you for answers, and in the middle of all that is a person who just wants to join in.”

87% of organisations reported some form of equality and diversity training for their staff. For 25%, this was optional to attend, and 57% did not require freelance staff, agency workers and contractors to attend this training, even if it was mandatory for internal staff.

43% of organisations with equality and diversity training reported that this did not include information about trans and non-binary inclusion.

Nearly all organisations reported an interest in taking part in specific trans and non-binary inclusion training.

When asked what kinds of training would be most beneficial, survey respondents requested information about:

- Terminology about sex and gender identity, including dog-whistles to avoid
- Information about pronouns
- Guidance on providing single sex services
- Handling complaints from clients about discrimination
- Handling complaints about trans and non-binary inclusion
- Information about why trans and non-binary inclusion is valuable
- Clarifications on the Equality Act 2010
- Case studies about good and bad trans and non-binary inclusion

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Organisations felt that a lack of safe spaces and poor staff confidence may result in incidents of discrimination. Respondents worried that trans and non-binary participants might not feel able to access their services due to a fear of being unwelcome.

"There's a fear of judgement, a fear of prejudice, a fear of being unkind and thoughtless. There's lots of fear."

The issue of single sex spaces was raised by many respondents, who sought more information about how trans and non-binary people fit into these spaces, and how the needs of others should be balanced:

"(We've) hosted women's only events, where we have participants who can't exercise in front of men and would otherwise be marginalised ... especially for religious based groups, (there's a) balance of religious belief vs other protected characteristics."

"Trans women are allowed at our women's only sessions, but this has brought up difficult conversations."

"People have a range of views, and it can be tricky to balance, there are legitimate views on all sides, it's not as black and white as it might be in other spaces. How do you manage all of those views and do something that will work for everyone?"

This was also highlighted as a barrier to inclusion where single sex spaces were the norm. Gendered changing rooms, toilets and single gender activity classes were raised as potential issues, particularly for non-binary clients.

"If a person doesn't know where they fit in or where they can get changed, how can they get involved?"

In relation to single sex spaces, some raised the issue of physical safety, wondering how risk should be managed in single sex activity spaces with participants of different body types and strength.

"(I think) safety depends on the type of activity; contact sport might be tricky with including different physicalities. A trans person might be put at risk, or others might be ... physical contact is a concern."

There was a recognition that physical safety was emphasised more in relation to trans women, stating that,

"There's an extra layer for trans women; if you're too good, that becomes a problem. You have to fit in enough that folks don't find it unfair or that you have an advantage."

Some organisations recognised that people's needs would likely change depending on the intersections of their identity;

"(Trans and non-binary people) also face the same wide range of barriers that all people face, and some of these may be further exacerbated by intersectional characteristics, in addition to their gender identity."

Those surveyed had many suggestions about how spaces could be more welcoming. Trans specific facilities or classes, followed by gender neutral facilities and staff training were the most supported interventions.

Based on the experiences shared by trans and non-binary participants and leisure organisations, this project has identified the following recommendations:

1. **Inclusive policies – covering terms of reference and dress codes**
2. **Conscious design – including bathroom and changing room provision, and inclusive facilitation**
3. **Trans specific services**
4. **Diversity in membership – including demographic monitoring and inclusive advertising**
5. **Staff training**

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS: 1. INCLUSIVE POLICIES – COVERING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DRESS CODES

It is important for leisure organisations, sport teams, and those working within sport, movement and exercise to have clear, public facing inclusion policies, outlining various information that staff and clients may need to know, or have easy access to.

Such a policy should be focused on maximising inclusion for all, and detail steps the organisation has taken to remove or reduce barriers for different groups.

“Manchester Front Runners have a good and publicly accessible trans inclusion policy that I was impressed by and ... convinced me to join.”

This could include general information such as:

- A position statement on the organisation’s commitment to inclusion.
 - This provides a tangible goal for the organisation to meet, and for clients to hold the organisation accountable to.

- A summary of the known barriers to participation for various groups, and what the organisation has done to reduce these where reasonably possible.
- The training that staff have received to help overcome barriers to participation.
- Any third party organisations that have been consulted to remove barriers to participation.

On trans and non-binary inclusion specifically, it is good practice to detail:

- How trans and non-binary people should use the facilities and services on offer.
 - This might include details about which changing rooms and bathrooms that trans and non-binary people are expected to use.
 - This could also include information about whether trans and non-binary people are welcome within single sex classes, and whether trans and non-binary clients are expected to disclose their gender identity before using a specific space.

- Where there is a national governing body associated with the organisation or club, information about whether the organisation or team is a member of this governing body or not.
 - The club or organisation may be a member of an associated national governing body that has adopted a trans exclusionary stance.
- In this circumstance, it is helpful to explain how trans and non-binary clients may still be able to access the organisation, or where this is not appropriate, information about alternative provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS: 1. INCLUSIVE POLICIES – COVERING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DRESS CODES

Terms of Reference

Having a clear term of reference for your organisation can be a practical way to support trans and non-binary inclusion. A Term of Reference usually includes behaviours that participants are expected to display during their interaction with the service, such as respect for all, fairness and inclusion. This may constitute a code of conduct.

A terms of reference can also explicitly outline who can and cannot use the service. You may include a statement such as:

“This is a women centred space. This includes trans women and trans feminine non-binary people.”

When facilitating a trans inclusive space, it can be useful to include a clause in your terms of reference stating that oppressive behaviour will not be tolerated. For example, you might include the statement:

“This is a safe space for all. Oppressive behaviour will not be tolerated, and you will be asked to leave. This includes homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism and fatphobia.”

Depending on the type of service on offer, it may be appropriate to have multiple terms of references for different activities or groups, particularly if these are aimed at different audiences.

A comprehensive terms of reference provides a framework by which disruptive or abusive clients can be removed from the space without grounds for dispute. This can also protect the space from undue or vexatious complaints.

“(Organisers) need to be thorough and clear about how ... decisions are made, how conflict is resolved (and) who people can talk to about grievances. So often these things haven’t been thought through, and that leads to unhelpful levels of stress when ... conflicts arise.”

“So often experiences of marginalisation and transphobia can be alienating; it can make you feel that you’re alone and not supported. The biggest way to combat this is facilitators, allies or some kind of authority ... taking responsibility for people’s wellbeing and taking that seriously.”

For more information, see **Addendum: Implications of the 2025 Supreme Court Ruling on Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion.**

RECOMMENDATIONS: 1. INCLUSIVE POLICIES – COVERING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DRESS CODES

Competitive fairness and safety

There may be concern that including trans and non-binary people in team sport in particular, will create unfair competitive advantage.

It is important to consider this within the context of the activity; most competitive sport necessitate certain players to have advantages over other players. Natural talent, the time and money an individual has to invest in kit or training, and variations in muscle mass, strength and height all vary between players, including players of the same recorded sex.

In grassroots and amateur sport, players are not necessarily motivated by competition, as much as other factors such as maintaining or developing fitness, socialising and making friends, and learning a new skill.

“The debate about fairness seems to very poorly understood in terms of competitive advantage; it probably doesn’t matter all that much in community sport.”

If your organisation wants to include trans and non-binary people in mixed teams, but is concerned about fairness and safety, there are a few points to consider:

- Trans and non-binary people are not inherently stronger and taller, or weaker and smaller, than cisgender people. The factors affecting a trans and cis person’s physical fitness, strength, weight and height will fluctuate with age, hormone profile and rate of exercise. You cannot understand the level of risk, unsafety or unfairness an individual poses to anyone else by their trans status alone.
- To ensure competitive fairness, there are other factors that can help determine which team mates would be a good fit to play together. This will vary by sport, but it may be more appropriate to determine teams based on skill or fitness level, strength or weight class, or simply existing friendships.

- Codes of conduct or rules that are designed around mixed teams and based on thorough risk assessments can help reduce disadvantage and injury.
- For example, your organisation may include a rule that players in a mixed gender football team cannot perform slide tackles, and must avoid physical contact with other players next to fences/cages to reduce the risk of injury.

RECOMMENDATIONS: 1. INCLUSIVE POLICIES – COVERING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DRESS CODES

Clear dress expectations

All sport, movement and exercise facilities and spaces have a dress code, whether this is codified on paper or by the expectations of others.

The attire that should be worn when exercising may seem obvious to some, but for trans and non-binary people, who may also have limited disposable income to spend on new clothes, it can be difficult to know what these expectations are.

For example, the societal expectation is that men wear swimming trunks and no shirt when using a pool. However, for a trans man or masculine person, it may not be appropriate to go topless. Likewise, a trans woman may not feel able to wear a swimming costume.

For someone who may not have exercised much as an adult, or may not have exercised in public in their current gender presentation, it may not be sufficient to ask clients to wear 'appropriate clothing', because this lacks sufficient detail.

For this reason, it is good practice to give participants clear instructions about dress code. This will likely include a description of what the activity will entail, so participants have sufficient context. For example:

"For this activity, you will be using an exercise bike, so please do not wear loose or flowing clothing as this may get stuck in the machine and cause injury. We recommend form fitting clothing that you will be comfortable getting sweaty in, and supportive, closed footwear such as trainers."



RECOMMENDATIONS: 1. INCLUSIVE POLICIES – COVERING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DRESS CODES

It may also be appropriate to include details about clothing in the terms of reference for a facility or space. This could include points of note such as not allowing clothing with offensive slogans, or not allowing participants to be topless.

Regarding swimwear, it is important to include trans and non-binary specific provisions within dress expectations, to avoid embarrassment or complaints. For example:

“When using the pool, please wear swimwear that you feel comfortable in, that does not restrict your movement.

- You are welcome to wear wetsuits and other full coverage garments for any reason, regardless of sex or gender identity.
- When wearing t-shirts, please ensure these are designed for use in the pool. We recommend against regular cotton t-shirts, as these can become heavy when waterlogged, and may restrict your movement.

- We have a policy against nudity when using the pool, and therefore, women and people with breasts (including trans women using HRT and trans men, trans masculine and non-binary people who have not undergone top surgery) must wear garments that cover their chest.
- Trans women who have not undergone lower surgery may wear swimming costumes, bikinis etc, provided these provide sufficient coverage as to not expose the genitals.
- If you have any questions, please contact (INSERT CONTACT).”

It is also important to recognise that purchasing exercise gear can be expensive. When going through transition, a trans or non-binary person might need to replace most of their clothes, either for comfort or safety reasons. Signposting to low-cost options can be beneficial. Organisations could also organise clothes swap events for participants to donate their unwanted kit.

Sport clubs or teams might also consider a bursary scheme, by which members can apply for financial support to pay for kit. For grassroots teams, the easiest way to facilitate this is by asking everyone who can to donate an extra few pounds when paying their club fees.

If your organisation operates a kit shop, you may wish to consider how products can be made gender neutral. If the sport equipment on sale is categorised by gender, you could instead sort items by weight, height or ability level instead.

RECOMMENDATIONS: 2. CONSCIOUS DESIGN – INCLUDING BATHROOM AND CHANGING ROOM PROVISION, AND INCLUSIVE FACILITATION

Organisations seeking to improve inclusion should consider a more active approach to facility design, client journeys and session facilitation.

Gender neutral facilities

Conscious facility design might include making facilities gender neutral. There are different requirements for this depending on the space.

Bathrooms

For bathroom facilities, Part T of the Schedule 1 Building Regulations 2010 requires that workplace and public buildings in England that apply for Buildings Regulations approval after 1st October 2024 must make provision for single sex toilets, unless there is insufficient space.

Buildings of this type can also include gender neutral bathroom provision, as long as there is existing single sex bathroom access.

However, sport buildings are excluded from this provision.

Instead, Sport England recommends that, ‘in addition to separate male, female and accessible toilet provision, there should always be some all-gender toilet provision’³. For gender neutral provision, the following conditions must be met⁴:

- Cubicle walls and doors must be full ceiling to floor height
- Facilities should be self-contained, incorporating toilet, sink, hand drying facilities, shelving, sanitary bin and mirror within the cubicle.

“I greatly appreciate an option for gender neutral toilets in any space. I regularly hold the need to go to the toilet for several hours if there isn’t a gender-neutral option or I don’t feel the guarantee of acceptance if I use the toilet that aligns with my gender expression and identity.”

3. Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D – Changing and Toilet Provision. Sport England. Section 2.3.3 ‘All-Gender Toilet Provision’. Page 39. Published July 2024: https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2024-08/AISF-Part-D-Changing-and-toilet-provision.pdf?VersionId=INNjb4mGmpaqIM6dDj_Y80.mCu1cv0_B

4. Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D – Changing and Toilet Provision. Sport England. Section 2.3.3 ‘All-Gender Toilet Provision’. Page 39. Published July 2024: https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2024-08/AISF-Part-D-Changing-and-toilet-provision.pdf?VersionId=INNjb4mGmpaqIM6dDj_Y80.mCu1cv0_B



RECOMMENDATIONS: 2. CONSCIOUS DESIGN – INCLUDING BATHROOM AND CHANGING ROOM PROVISION, AND INCLUSIVE FACILITATION

Changing rooms

For changing facilities, Sport England states that ‘except in the very smallest facilities ... there should always be separate female and male changing, wheelchair accessible changing ... and all-gender changing provision’⁵.

Where all-gender changing rooms are provided, cubicle walls and doors must be full ceiling to floor height⁶.

All-gender changing provision is beneficial for trans and non-binary people, but also families with mixed gender children and coaches or teachers following safeguarding procedures requiring separation while changing⁷.

It may also be beneficial to station lockers for personal belongings outside of the changing room, or have some locker provision that does not require accessing the changing rooms. This may benefit clients who do not otherwise need to access this space, or may feel uncomfortable using the changing facilities due to fear of discrimination.

“I wish there were more efforts ... to make gender neutral changing spaces and toilets because this still seems like a wild concept to many ... at the gym ... I couldn’t go in either changing room to change, as I had negative experiences in each. I eventually gave up ... I feel like I don’t belong anywhere.”

Meeting the needs of local populations

Some people may prefer single sex facilities, or need single sex spaces to meet religious or cultural expectations or practices. These requirements need not be in opposition to gender neutral facilities.

A good example of this approach is Broughton Leisure Centre. The centre caters for a large Jewish population many of whom require single sex facilities. During specific times each week, the centre, including the pool, gym and classes, are either male or female only. Outside of these times, all facilities are mixed sex, including changing rooms and bathrooms.

This required only minor adaptations to the building, but allows the centre to cater to both those that prefer a single sex space, or those that prefer a mixed space within the same organisation.

5. Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D – Changing and Toilet Provision. Sport England. Section 1.7.5 ‘Changing Provision’. Page 26. Published July 2024: https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2024-08/AISF-Part-D-Changing-and-toilet-provision.pdf?VersionId=INNjb4mGmpaqIM6dDj_Y80.mCu1cv0_B
6. Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D – Changing and Toilet Provision. Sport England. Section 1.7.5 ‘Changing Provision’. Page 26. Published July 2024: https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2024-08/AISF-Part-D-Changing-and-toilet-provision.pdf?VersionId=INNjb4mGmpaqIM6dDj_Y80.mCu1cv0_B
7. Accessible and inclusive sports facilities (AISF): Part D – Changing and Toilet Provision. Sport England. Section 1.7.5 ‘Changing Provision’. Page 26. Published July 2024: https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2024-08/AISF-Part-D-Changing-and-toilet-provision.pdf?VersionId=INNjb4mGmpaqIM6dDj_Y80.mCu1cv0_B

RECOMMENDATIONS: 2. CONSCIOUS DESIGN – INCLUDING BATHROOM AND CHANGING ROOM PROVISION, AND INCLUSIVE FACILITATION

What if gender neutral facilities are not an option?

It is appreciated that not every centre can take this approach or modify their facilities to add gender neutral options. In these circumstances, it is important to consider how a space can actively include, rather than passively exclude.

Considerations can include:

- Detailed descriptions of what a facility looks like and how it can be accessed.
 - This could include centre maps, video walk throughs and audio descriptions.
- The option to book a tour with a member of staff, who can answer questions about how a client may need to access a space.

- Where it is impossible for a client to access a specific space due to their gender identity, offering an alternative space. This may be at the same facility, or a different option locally.
- Information about quiet times of day that a client might wish to access the facilities.
- Hosting trans specific sessions (see **Trans Specific Classes** for more information).

“My gym has been very supportive. When showing me around they gave me options for changing facilities I could use. They also let me have a locker for free outside of the changing rooms in case I didn’t feel comfortable using the changing rooms. People normally pay to rent them.”



RECOMMENDATIONS: 2. CONSCIOUS DESIGN – INCLUDING BATHROOM AND CHANGING ROOM PROVISION, AND INCLUSIVE FACILITATION

Facilitation

When facilitating an exercise class, activity or club within a group environment, there are practices that a facilitator can implement to promote inclusion. These include:

- Asking attendees to share their name and pronouns at the beginning of the session.
 - You might wish to have optional name and pronoun badges for attendees.

"I use they/them pronouns ... all day every day people misgender me as they read me as cis-woman. It hurts. I don't go out as much to avoid it. Very few people remember when I correct them. Even close friends."

- Whether you should ask attendees to share their name or pronouns heavily depends on the context of the session. If it is a new group, new facilitator, a space likely to have LGBTQ+ clients, or a trans specific space, it can be good practice to ask attendees to share their pronouns.

- However, if it is an established group where members are known to each other, or there is a single trans or non-binary person, it can be stigmatising or unnecessary to have attendees share pronouns.
- A facilitator should be led by the needs of the group.

"It's tough, on the one hand a ... pronoun circle is a indicator that a place is trans friendly. (However), it can be pretty uncomfortable doing that where the majority of people are cis and again just puts pressure to out myself as trans since my pronouns will obviously not match with (theirs)."

"Overly virtue signalling can make the dynamic extremely overbearing; I just want to be treated normally. Pronoun circles seem very performative ... it seems to be something that allies think is helpful but it is not often the case."

(See glossary for more information on pronoun circles)

- Giving intensity options for attendees to choose their own activity level based on their needs.
- Considering whether a space can be delineated by ability, rather than sex.
- Arriving early to greet any attendees who may need additional time to familiarise themselves with the space.

RECOMMENDATIONS: 3. TRANS SPECIFIC SERVICES

56% of trans and non-binary people surveyed agreed that trans specific activity sessions would be most effective in increasing participation. Swimming, yoga and football were the most commonly discussed activities that participants wanted to take part in, but were unable to for a number of reasons.

A few organisations across Greater Manchester facilitate trans specific activity sessions, and have gathered lots of learning about how to run these spaces.

Not a Phase were highlighted by a number of survey respondents as an example of good practice. Their **Misfits** programme, which organises fitness and self-defence classes, hosted by trained community members, were widely praised as supportive, inclusive spaces.

“Misfits gym sessions are amazing... I have been going for the past year and a half... and the instructor is incredibly supportive and runs great sessions.”

“Misfits Manchester weights class for trans and non-binary people are great.”

It is also important to consider:

- Whether the person facilitating the session is suitable, the training they have received and the lived experience they do or don't have.
 - This is also important when considering the presence of support staff such as lifeguards.
- How participants might interact with other people using the space.
 - If a session is being hosted at a venue with other facilities which are running simultaneously, participants may interact with other clients. It may be beneficial to designate a specific entrance, and specific changing and bathroom facilities if a space is to be shared.

Importantly, while hosting trans and non-binary specific sessions in-house was felt to be beneficial, some highlighted the need for investment in trans-led grassroots initiatives instead.

“Spaces that used to exist like TransFit are crucial and genuinely have potential to change people's lives ... empowering grassroots initiatives is the only way to break through deeply ingrained transphobia, rather than (only) uplifting cisgender allies ... to be the faces for what trans inclusion in sport looks like.”

There are many ways that organisations can support grassroots, trans led work.

For some organisations, it may be appropriate to reward grants to grassroots groups in their local area. If financial support of this kind is not possible, other options could include providing facilities at low or no cost, supporting with recruitment and advertising, paying for consultancy or providing sponsorship for kits and equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS: 4. DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP – INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC MONITORING AND INCLUSIVE ADVERTISING

Demographic Monitoring

A simple change that organisations can make is to include sexual orientation and gender identity demographic monitoring in participant sign up information.

Demographic monitoring is common in many organisations, as it helps service providers to understand who is (and is not) using their facilities, identify gaps in provision, and tailor their services to the needs of their local community.

It is common for data on age, gender, disability status and race/ethnicity to be collected, but it can be just as important to capture sexual orientation and gender identity too.

“What do we put on forms? It’s less helpful when forms are asking what my sex is, when the options are male, female and other. Why am I always ‘other’?”

The most common and non-intrusive way to collect this data is to ask participants to complete a short demographic survey when they sign up for your service. It is important to ask all participants in order to gather a representative collection of data.

When asking about sexuality and gender identity, the following format should be used:

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

1. Heterosexual or Straight
2. Gay or Lesbian
3. Bisexual
4. Other sexual orientation not listed

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

1. Woman (including trans woman)
2. Man (including trans man)
3. Non-binary
4. In another way

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

1. Yes
2. No

RECOMMENDATIONS: 4. DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP – INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC MONITORING AND INCLUSIVE ADVERTISING

You can find more information about LGBTQ+ demographic monitoring here: **If We're Not Counted, We Don't Count – LGBT Foundation.**

There are many ways in which this data can be used to improve a service. For instance, demographic monitoring data may show that an organisation has a high proportion of clients with diabetes. To ensure they are meeting the needs of those clients, a leisure organisation might partner with a patient participation group to run diabetes management classes.

When considering trans and non-binary people, demographic monitoring may show that there are very few trans and non-binary people using a specific service. Knowing that the service is under utilised by this cohort can help staff identify a need to make the space more inclusive or welcoming.

An organisation could also cross reference their demographics with those of the local population using Office for National Statistics (ONS) census data, to check how representative their services are of their local community. If inclusion is shown to be lacking, this can help evidence the need for targeted solutions.



RECOMMENDATIONS: 4. DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP – INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC MONITORING AND INCLUSIVE ADVERTISING

Inclusive Advertising

When advertising services or facilities online, it is important to ensure these are representative of a diverse range of participants. If trans and non-binary people cannot see themselves reflected in recruitment materials, they may assume the service is not for them, regardless of the inclusion measures a organisation has taken.

Including a wide range of body sizes, gender presentations, dress and mobilities can help clients feel comfortable taking a chance with a new class, club or facility.

However, services need to avoid being performative. For example, if the activity being advertised is not accessible for wheelchair users, it would be performative to include a wheelchair user in the advertising images.

Diverse and expansive advertising must be accompanied by meaningful inclusion steps in order to have a tangible effect on overall participation.

High Ballers FC were cited as a positive example of inclusive advertising. The team plays in Manchester's trans inclusive Alternative Football League North, and has a significant

following on Instagram. The team uses the platform to keep supporters up to date with the team, and recruit new members. With consent, images of each match are posted, which often includes players who are visibly trans and gender non-conforming.

This visibility has encouraged more trans and non-binary players to join the team, as they have been able to see others taking part. It has connected High Ballers FC to other trans and non-binary inclusive football teams across the UK, with the ability to share learning, expertise and upcoming inclusive football events.

When considering inclusive advertising, it is important to get explicit consent from any models or members of the public, but also inform them of how any images will be used, and how they might be affected personally. For example, images showing visibly gender non-conforming people might be subject to harassment online, or may be defaced if they are printed. Providing signposting support for individuals who may be targeted by such harassment is an important aspect of designing inclusive communications.



RECOMMENDATIONS: 5. STAFF TRAINING

87% of the organisations surveyed for this project reported some form of equality and diversity training for their staff, however for 43% of organisations, this did not include information about trans and non-binary inclusion.

Staff training on inclusion is vitally important in helping colleagues understand their responsibilities. This training should be mandatory, and provided for all staff, including full time, part time, sessional and agency colleagues, as well as volunteers. Training should not be restricted to those in customer facing roles, as all staff will occasionally work in an environment with customers, and should be expected to represent the values of their organisation.

The level and specificity of training may depend on the colleagues role in the organisation. All staff should be provided with training outlining the Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty (where applicable), and the different types of discrimination a customer may encounter. This training will be more effective if it is LGBTQ+ specific, highlighting examples, language and learning specifically relevant to trans and non-binary communities.

If the organisation is a **registered third party hate crime reporting centre**, all staff should also receive training on how they can support customers to report discrimination and safeguard vulnerable clients experiencing hate crime.

Staff in positions of management may benefit from more in-depth training on LGBTQ+ inclusion, managing staff conduct in relation to minoritised clients, applying the **Equality Act 2010 in a trans inclusive way**, and how they can respond to Freedom of Information Act Requests (see glossary for more information).

Additionally, colleagues working in marketing and communications teams may require specific support on how to navigate media backlash to public facing trans and non-binary inclusion initiatives (such as trans specific classes), and how they can reach trans and non-binary customers in their marketing.

It is recommended that organisations work with LGBTQ+ organisations to deliver this training, rather than develop in house sessions. This is recommended, as many LGBTQ+ organisations can deliver sessions developed through years of experience and expertise on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Outsourcing also removes the burden on staff with lived experience to develop this training, despite not being within their job role or professional expertise.

Alongside this guidance, LGBT Foundation and GM Moving have developed a training session for sport, clubs and leisure organisations on trans and non-binary inclusion in sport, movement and exercise. If you would like to access this training, please get in touch [here](#).

For more information on LGBTQ+ inclusion training providers, see **LGBT Foundation's Training Academy**.

ADDENDUM 1: INTERSECTIONAL INCLUSION

Survey participants highlighted many ways that organisations could make their services more inclusive. Some of these were more holistic suggestions, or ideas that did not directly related to trans and non-binary inclusion specifically, but took a more intersectional approach.

22% of trans and non-binary people are long-term unemployed and 28% of trans and non-binary people report 1 or more disabilities compared to 9% and 20% of cisgender people respectively⁸. Therefore, it is important to consider how these aspects of one's identity may impact their ability to participate.

Trans and non-binary people of colour are likely to face compounded discrimination due to their gender identity and race/ethnicity, and therefore trans and non-binary inclusion is incomplete without an understanding of the challenges faced by people of colour in accessing services.

The following are ideas for inclusion that consider the intersectionality of trans and non-binary experiences:

- Low/no cost or pay-what-you-can sessions
- Signposting to local public transport services, with staff on hand to discuss route planning with clients
- Signposting to local childcare services, or child inclusive sessions
- Anti-racism training
- Disability inclusion training
 - This could include specific neurodiversity awareness training, as trans and non-binary people are between 3 and 6 times more likely to be autistic or otherwise neurodiverse⁹.
- Dementia awareness training
- A variety of timings for classes and club meetings, to accommodate those with employment and childcare responsibilities.



8. Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021 – Office for National Statistics: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/bulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census2021>

9. 'Transgender and gender-diverse individuals are more likely to be autistic and report higher autistic traits' – University of Cambridge: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/transgender-and-gender-diverse-individuals-are-more-likely-to-be-autistic-and-report-higher-autistic>

ADDENDUM 2: IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2025 SUPREME COURT RULING ON TRANS AND NON-BINARY INCLUSION

In May 2025, the UK Supreme Court ruled that, for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, a trans person's legal sex is always that of their recorded sex at birth, regardless of whether or not they have a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC, see glossary for more information).

For example, a trans woman's legal sex is male, and a trans man's legal sex is female under the Equality Act 2010.

The implications of this ruling will be wide reaching and difficult to determine until the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Code of Practice is published in full, and subsequent case law works its way through UK courts.

Therefore, while this guide cannot give specific advice on the law, it is understood at time of writing that organisations may need to consider the following points:

- A service that is run as a single or separate sex service, which is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, cannot admit trans people of the opposite sex recorded at birth, and remain a single or separate sex space.

- For example, a women's only swimming session that is designated as a single sex space cannot admit trans women and retain their single sex designation under the Equality Act, but may admit trans men and non-binary people recorded female at birth.
- A space that was single or separate sex that choose to admit trans people of the opposite recorded sex at birth will become a mixed sex space.
 - For example, a men's weightlifting class that chooses to include trans men is no longer a single sex space, but becomes a mixed sex space that could in theory, need to admit people of any gender to avoid discrimination.
- Trans and non-binary people may be excluded from a single sex space, even if they have the same recorded sex at birth as the intended clients, if excluding people with the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment' is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

- For example, a women's self-defence class could exclude trans men and non-binary people recorded female at birth, even though their sex is legally female, if restricting access to people with the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment' is necessary to maintain safety, and this was a proportionate means of achieving this legitimate aim.
- There are likely to be very few instances in which restricting trans and non-binary people's access in this way is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

This guidance has been produced by LGBT Foundation in collaboration with Greater Manchester (GM) Moving between September 2024 and May 2025. It is not intended as legal advice, and is provided for reference only.

ADDENDUM 2: IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2025 SUPREME COURT RULING ON TRANS AND NON-BINARY INCLUSION

- Toilets and changing rooms that are designated separately for men and women are considered separate sex spaces, and therefore cannot, in theory, admit trans and non-binary people of the opposite recorded sex at birth.
- For example, a trans man cannot use the men's toilets, and a trans woman cannot use the women's toilets. However a trans man would be allowed to use the women's toilets, and a trans woman would be allowed to use the men's toilets.
- This means that organisations must either enforce that trans and non-binary people use the toilet of their recorded sex at birth, or provide alternative toilet provision for trans and non-binary people.
- It may not be acceptable to use existing accessible bathroom provision to fulfil this need, as this would in theory, restrict access for disabled clients.

- Any restriction applied to clients accessing bathrooms must be applied equally to all to avoid potential discrimination.
- For example, if ID checks are required before clients can use the bathroom, all clients must have their ID checked, not only trans and non-binary people.

In order to ensure trans and non-binary inclusion under these new circumstances, your organisation should ensure that single sex classes, clubs or other activities have an alternative mixed sex provision and consider whether spaces that had previously been single sex should continue to be restricted in this way. For instance, it may be more beneficial to categorise activity groups or clubs by ability or strength.

In theory, an organisation could continue to run classes, clubs or activities designed for people of a certain gender and include trans and non-binary people. If an organisation were to host a women centred swimming session, that was open to anyone who identifies as a woman, and wrote a comprehensive term of reference outlining expected behaviours, it could continue to operate a trans inclusive women's space. The key difference is that this would not be a legally designated 'single sex space', and therefore would need to admit people who were not women, as long as they followed the terms of reference for the group.

LGBT Foundation and GM Moving will update this section following the publication of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Code of Practice Consultation.

This guidance has been produced by LGBT Foundation in collaboration with Greater Manchester (GM) Moving between September 2024 and May 2025. It is not intended as legal advice, and is provided for reference only.

ADDENDUM 3: TRANS EXCLUSIONARY POLICIES AT A NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY LEVEL

Many sport governing bodies have ruled that trans and non-binary people must be excluded from teams and competitions in recent years. If your governing body takes this stance, as an organisation, there are several options available to you:

- Exclude trans and non-binary players from your team and signpost to alternative provision.
- Disaffiliate from the governing body.
 - The process of disaffiliation will differ depending on the national governing body, and may have consequences such as loss of funding.
- Continue to allow trans and non-binary players to train with the team, but do not enter them into league competitions.
- Continue to allow trans and non-binary players to participate at all levels in protest of the ban.
 - There will be consequences of this action, including the possibility of suspension.

It is important to consult with the team, and particularly the trans and non-binary people directly affected by any ban, to determine which course of action your group should take.

“I would love to do a lot more sport, but many sport clubs have had to change their trans inclusion policies because governing bodies are giving in to a disproportionately loud and powerful transphobic minority. I used to volunteer with British Cycling, but I stopped because of their policy change.”

It may be beneficial to seek out grassroots provision in your local area to understand which groups already exist and where support might be needed. This could be in the form of mentoring, coaching, providing support staff such as referees or facilities such as football pitches free of charge. Volunteering and support of this kind may help support your local LGBTQ+ sport provision, and may help to offset harms faced by trans and non-binary people within your organisation who can no longer participate.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Androgyny

Having the appearance of being both male and female.

Assigned sex at birth

The sex assigned to a person by a medical professional when they are born, usually identified through external examination of the genitals.

*This may also be written as **sex recorded at birth**.*

Assigned female at birth (AFAB)

A person who is decided to be female at birth based on external genitalia.

Assigned male at birth (AMAB)

A person who is decided to be male at birth based on external genitalia.

Bind / Binding

‘Binding’ refers to the act of suppressing or hiding the physical appearance of breasts using a binder (a garment specifically designed to safely conceal breasts) or other

means such as sport tape. Binding is commonly practised by trans men and trans masculine non-binary people to create a more masculine figure. More information on safe binding practices is available here: **Safe Binding Guide – LGBT Foundation**.

Bottom Surgery

Refers to several different procedures undergone to change, remove or modify internal or external genitalia and/or sexual organs.

‘Coming Out’

Term used to describe the act of disclosing one’s sexuality or gender identity to others.

Being ‘out’ can mean that your sexuality or trans status is known to others.

People may be ‘out’ or not in different spaces and with different people in their life. It is important not to assume that everyone in that person’s life knows their sexuality or trans status, even if you do.

Cisgender

An adjective describing people whose gender identity is the same as their assigned sex at birth.

Cisheteronormativity

A term used to describe the way in which society at large may expect everyone to be cisgender and heterosexual as a default.

Deadnaming

Using a trans or non-binary person’s previous name(s). This could be accidental or with the intent to bully, harass or belittle someone. Regardless of intent, deadnaming can be hurtful.

Deadnaming may constitute discrimination depending on the context in which it occurs.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Deed Poll

A document allowing a person to legally change their name for all purposes.

This may be enrolled (registered with the court for a fee, and searchable by the general public) or unenrolled (not registered with the court, usually made by an individual themselves for free).

Both are legally valid, and it may constitute discrimination to refuse an individual's deed poll on the grounds that it is unenrolled.

Fatphobia

Harassment, bullying or discriminatory conduct targeted at people on the basis of their weight.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

A law allowing members of the public to request information held by public bodies. More information on the Freedom of information Act can be found here: **What is the FOI Act? – Information Commissioner's Office.**

10. Maya Forstater v CGD Europe and Others: UKEAT/0105/20/J0J, 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60c1cce1d3bf7f4bd9814e39/Maya_Forstater_v_CGD_Europe_and_others_UKEAT0105_20_J0J.pdf

FTM/MTF

Older terms used to describe trans people who experience transition as going from 'male to female' (MTF) or 'female to male' (FTM).

Gender

'Gender' can encompass a variety of different meanings. For many, it is interchangeable with 'sex' (see definition below), however many more disagree with this definition. Instead, 'gender' may mean a holistic view of the social, psychological, emotional and cultural traits that classify an individual as female or male or another gender. This can include expectations about how men and women are 'supposed' to behave in relation to career aspirations, hobbies, emotions, child-rearing, clothing etc.

As 'gender' can be a vague term, '**gender identity**' is often used to describe an individual experience of gender, which may or may not be different from that assigned at birth (see 'sex' and 'assigned sex at birth' for more information).

'**Gender expression**' describes the ways in which a person conveys their gender identity to others. This may include clothing, hair, make up, voice, name and pronouns.

Gender Critical

A range of philosophical beliefs or opinions that generally view biological sex as an unchanging, distinctly separate category from gender identity, which may include the view that gender identity as a distinct concept is false or irrelevant. Gender critical beliefs are protected under the characteristic of 'religion or belief' within the Equality Act 2010. However, according to the 2021 legal ruling Forstater vs CGD Europe , 'those with gender critical beliefs (cannot) misgender trans persons with impunity'; rather, they will 'continue to be subject to the prohibitions on discrimination and harassment under the Equality Act'¹⁰.

Gender Dysphoria

Anxiety, discomfort or unease due to a difference between someone's recorded sex at birth (see 'assigned sex at birth' in the glossary) and their gender identity (see 'gender identity' in the glossary).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gender Inclusive Language

Gender inclusive language (also known as gender additive language) is when different cohorts and demographics are specifically included in a description, for example ‘women, girls and some trans and non-binary people menstruate’, rather than ‘women and girls menstruate’.

Gender Neutral Language

Gender neutral language is intended to de-emphasise gendered terms in circumstances where gender is not relevant. An example is replacing ‘good evening, ladies and gentlemen’ with ‘good evening, everybody’.

Gender neutral language can help people feel included and avoid terms that may be considered outdated or stereotypical.

However, in some circumstances, particularly where gender may affect the ways in which someone interacts with a service, gender inclusive language may be more appropriate.

Gender Recognition Certificate

A certificate that allows a trans person to change their legal sex from male to female or female to male on their birth, marriage and death certificates. It also makes it illegal to share a trans person’s gender history without their consent in a professional capacity.

Homo-, Bi-, Trans-, Intersexphobia

A noun describing fear or hatred of, or prejudice against, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex people, or those perceived to be, that may manifest in physical or emotional violence, discrimination, harassment, victimisation, exclusion and stigma.

Intersectionality

Recognition of the interactions between different minoritised identities (such as race, disability, class and gender), and the ways in which these create distinct forms of oppression or disadvantage.

Intersex

An adjective used to describe people whose sex characteristics (such as primary and secondary sex characteristics, hormones, genitals, chromosomes etc) do not fit ‘typical’ medical definitions of male or female.

LGBTQIA+

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and asexual. The ‘+’ includes identities not otherwise specifically named, such as pansexual and non-binary.

Non-Binary, Enby

Non-binary is an adjective describing identities that do not fit into binary definitions of male or female. This may be shortened as ‘enby’ (pronounced ‘N B’) by some non-binary people.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Passing

Being perceived as heterosexual or cisgender by others as an LGBTQIA+ person. This may be intentional (on the part of the LGBTQIA+ person) or unintentional (being assumed to be heterosexual or cisgender by others).

Pronouns

Pronouns are the words used to refer to people not being addressed directly, and they can be used instead of names in conversation. Often, pronouns have gendered implications. Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his and they/them/theirs.

Everybody has pronouns that they like to be called by, not just trans and non-binary people.

Some people may ask to be addressed with they/them/their pronouns, instead of he/him/his or she/her/hers.

It is good practice to include pronouns in any introductions, both face to face and online (as long as it is safe to), as this normalises asking and telling people about language requirements. This is especially important for cisgender people to do as it counters the idea that pronouns are

assumed unless there are special circumstances; for example, “my name is Mark and I use ‘he, him and his’ pronouns.”

For more information on pronouns, see LGBT Foundation’s **Guide to Understanding Pronouns**.

Pronoun Circle

This refers to the practice of having attendees share their name and pronouns together before the start of an activity.

Protected Characteristic

A set of 9 characteristics that are protected from discrimination in the UK by the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin

- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Although included in the law, the term ‘Gender Reassignment’ is considered outdated by many trans and non-binary people, as it emphasises medical transition over gender expression. It is important to note that individuals do not need to have undergone any medical treatment or surgery to be protected from gender reassignment discrimination.

Top Surgery

Refers to several different procedures undergone to either remove breast tissue to give the appearance of a flat chest, or to provide breast augmentation depending on the intended result.

Transgender, Trans

An adjective describing people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Transition

The processes that a trans and/or non-binary person may undergo to align their body, legal identity and social relationships with their gender identity, rather than their assigned sex at birth.

Transition generally has three categories: social, medical and legal.

Social transition involves telling others about new names and pronouns, coming out to others (if it is safe to do so), and finding communities of other trans and non-binary people.

Medical transition can include taking oestrogen or testosterone (commonly referred to as **Hormone Replacement Therapy** or **HRT**), which can provide feminising or masculinising effects. It may also involve undergoing various surgeries, depending on the desired outcomes for the individual.

Legal transition may encompass changing names legally via deed poll (see Deed Poll in the glossary), and/or applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate (see Gender Recognition Certificate in the glossary).

There is no standard transition pathway that trans and non-binary people must undertake, and everyone experiences their transition differently. It is therefore important to not make assumptions about an individual's transition.

Transmisogyny

Harassment, bullying or discriminatory conduct targeted at trans women or trans feminine people.

Sex

A noun denoting the classification of bodies as male, female or intersex based largely on external appearance and usually determined at birth.

Stealth

Term used to describe a trans or non-binary (or LGBTQA+) person that has chosen, for any number of legitimate reasons, not to share their gender history (or sexuality) with others.



FURTHER READING

Survey participants identified a number of organisations and individuals as good examples of trans and non-binary inclusive services. These included:

- **Inclusive Football Collective (running the Alternative Football League)**
- **Union Football Manchester**
- **Northern Aces LGBTQI+ Tennis Club**
- **Queer Out Here LGBTQ+ Hiking**
- **Scottee (@scotteeisfat) weight and gender inclusive yoga and fitness content**
- **The Underbelly - fat, black and queer inclusive yoga**
- **Upward Frog Yoga - LGBTQ+ inclusive studio based yoga**
- **Manchester Softball League**

SOURCES USED

'The Curious Connection Between Hypermobility and Neurodivergence' - SEDSConnective

'Transgender and gender-diverse individuals are more likely to be autistic and report higher autistic traits' - University of Cambridge

**Accessible and inclusive sport facilities (AISF):
Part D - Changing and Toilet Provision - Sport England**

**Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021 -
Office for National Statistics**

Maya Forstater v CGD Europe and Others: UKEAT/0105/20/J0J



Greater Manchester Moving > ^ < v