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Transgender & Non-binary Policy FAQs

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GLOSSARY

- **Birth Sex/Biological Sex:** Sex refers to the anatomical and physiological body type determined by chromosomes and is affected by reproductive hormones throughout life.
- **Cisgender man:** A person whose recognised birth sex is male and who identifies as a man.
- **Cisgender woman:** A person whose recognised birth sex is female and who identifies as a woman.
- **Cisgender:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with their recognised birth sex.
- **Gender identity:** Someone's internal perception of their gender – how they feel about their gender.
- **Non-binary:** Gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine and do not fit into the binary categorisation of male or female.
- **Transgender man:** A person with a recognised birth sex of female, who now identifies as a man.
- **Transgender woman:** A person with a recognised birth sex of male, who now identifies as a woman.
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is different from their recognised birth sex.

Gender	Female Competition Category	Male Competition Category
Cis-gender woman	✓	✗
Cis-gender man	✗	✓
Transgender woman	✗	✓
Transgender man	✓	✗
Non-binary person with a birth sex of female	✓	✗
Non-binary person with a birth sex of male	✗	✓

1. When will this policy come into effect?

This policy will be effective from 1st January 2027 and will be applied to all Tennis Ireland sanctioned competitions as defined as Tennis Ireland Senior, Junior and Masters Open Competitions.

2. Who will this policy be applied to and who will it impact?

This policy will apply to all competitors in Tennis Ireland sanctioned competitions as defined as Junior, Senior and Masters Open Competitions. This new policy will not impact or change the competition eligibility categories for most affiliated players. The policy will affect players whose current competition category differs from the category determined by this policy's eligibility criteria.

3. Do affiliated clubs have to adopt this policy?

No, affiliated clubs do not have to adopt this policy if they do not wish. Clubs can still exercise their own discretion when determining who is eligible to compete in gender categories for their own internal competitions and guidelines relating to the use of changing rooms and facilities.

4. Does this policy apply to all Junior Competitions?

Yes, Tennis Ireland is implementing this policy to apply to all Tennis Ireland sanctioned competitions and events, including all Tennis Ireland sanctioned Junior competitions.

5. What does it mean for players currently competing in categories that do not correspond to their birth sex?

Players who are currently registered in Tournament Software as a gender that does not align with their birth sex will be required to update their competition category in Tournament Software.

6. Does this policy mean that I will have to play in a sex category that doesn't align with my gender?

Tennis Ireland understands that this policy approach may cause concern and discomfort for the players affected. Tennis Ireland remains committed to ensuring that all players are welcomed, treated with dignity and respect, and able to participate in tennis in a safe and inclusive environment.

However, following a lengthy consultation and policy development process, Tennis Ireland believes that this policy is the best approach for Tennis Ireland-sanctioned competitions at this time. Players whose gender identity does not align with their birth sex will continue to be eligible to participate in all competitions, but must compete in the category that corresponds to their birth sex.



7. What should I do if I experience transphobic, anti-non-binary, or other discriminatory behaviour?

The dignity and respect of all affiliated members are of paramount importance to Tennis Ireland, and no players should be subjected to harassment and/or abuse of any nature. Any incidents of harassment and abuse should be reported through the relevant club processes or via Tennis Ireland's Complaint, Objection & Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

8. How will Tennis Ireland check if individuals are competing in the category that aligns with their birth sex?

Tennis Ireland trusts its players to make any necessary changes to their competition eligibility as required, in line with this new policy. Tennis Ireland will not ask for any medical or legal documentation relating to a player's birth sex and/or gender identity at any stage.

9. Will I be able to keep my World Tennis Number?

Yes, there will be no change to any player's World Tennis Number (WTN).

10. Why didn't Tennis Ireland implement the World Tennis Number (WTN) for this policy?

According to World Tennis, "the ITF World Tennis Number (WTN) is designed to be a gender-neutral rating system, but it does not fully neutralize the natural, physiological, and power advantages men often have in tennis compared to women of the same, or even slightly higher, rating." Having considered the available evidence and guidance, Tennis Ireland concluded that implementing the WTN would not be the most appropriate approach at this time.

11. Why didn't Tennis Ireland adopt the International Tennis Federation (ITF) /World Tennis Transgender and Non-Binary Player Competition Policy?

The ITF/World Tennis determines eligibility to play in gendered categories based on hormone testing i.e. a blood test determines the amount of testosterone a player has in their bloodstream. This approach would have been impractical to implement for every Tennis Ireland competition, would require the employment of medical staff and would also raise issues of medical data privacy. Furthermore, a number of representative organisations consulted during this process raised concerns regarding the use of hormone testing as a policy approach.

12. Do clubs have to adopt the changing room guidelines?

No, clubs do not have to adopt the guidelines in relation to changing rooms as most clubs are privately owned facilities. The policy regarding changing rooms will only apply to buildings that are run by Tennis Ireland e.g. National Tennis Centre.



13. What did the policy development process entail and who did Tennis Ireland engage with?

Over the past two and a half years, Tennis Ireland has engaged with many internal and external stakeholders to develop this policy. These included organisations representing a range of sporting, equality, inclusion, governance and participant perspectives – Sport Ireland, International Tennis Federation/World Tennis, Lawn Tennis Association, Swim Ireland, Badminton Ireland, IRFU, Trans Equality Network Ireland, Sex Matters, members of DEI committees and its affiliated members.

Tennis Ireland also reached out to other organisations in relation to contributing to this policy development process, but these organisations did not respond to its consultation invitation or were happy for another stakeholder group to represent their views on this policy.

14. I am an affiliated member and I did not have an opportunity to contribute to this policy development process.

Tennis Ireland wanted to ensure that the views of affiliated members were represented in this policy development process, as the National Governing Body for tennis on the island of Ireland. Tennis Ireland circulated a survey to every affiliated club on the island of Ireland with an ask to share the survey with their members.

Affiliated clubs were sent three emails over a five-week timeframe to ensure that as many affiliated members could respond to the survey as possible. Tennis Ireland decided to circulate the survey in this manner rather than posting a link on social media or via email, as Tennis Ireland wished to ensure that responses reflected the views of affiliated members.

15. If my club is hosting a Tennis Ireland competition and we have a different policy approach to Tennis Ireland – which policy takes precedence?

If your club is hosting a Tennis Ireland sanctioned competition – the competition playing rules as set out in this policy will apply. In relation to changing rooms and toilet use, a club's own rules and guidelines will apply.

