



April 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about transgender athletes. It is important for everybody to have the opportunity to play and enjoy sport. It is vital that we create the right environment at grassroots level so that everyone, including transgender people, can get active and participate in sport.

In September 2021, UK Sport published guidance for transgender inclusion in domestic sport. I understand the guidance considered the views, knowledge, and experience of hundreds of people with a lived experience in sport, including transgender people, and also explored the background to current policies domestically and internationally and considered the latest scientific findings affecting the inclusion of transgender people in domestic sport.

The UK Sport guidance followed a consultation which found that there was widespread support for ensuring that sport was a welcoming place for everyone in society, including for transgender people. It highlighted that there were concerns relating to safety and fairness in relation to transgender inclusion, particularly in female sport. While there was no consensus on a single solution as to how this should be addressed, it was clear that a wider range of solutions than those that are currently on offer needed to be identified.

The Guidance concludes that the inclusion of transgender people into female sport cannot be balanced regarding transgender inclusion, fairness and safety in gender-affected sport where there is meaningful competition. This is due to retained differences in strength, stamina and physique between the average woman compared with the average transgender woman or non-binary person assigned male at birth, with or without testosterone suppression. It did, however, note that sports are incredibly diverse and there can be no ‘one-size fits all’ approach. Therefore, for many sports, there may not be a common single competition model which will meet the needs of full transgender inclusion while retaining competitive fairness, particularly in female sport.

As such, governing bodies are encouraged to identify the best options for their sport and determine whether it may be possible to offer more than one version of their sport to achieve the different aims.

The Sports Council’s Equality Group completed a review into the inclusion of trans athletes in competitive sport. The review concluded that *“for many sports, the inclusion of transgender people, fairness and safety cannot co-exist in a single competitive model”*. The guidance, which covers community sport up to national level (not international, professional, or elite sport), states that the governing bodies for each sport should work out their priorities and choose whether they will focus on inclusion or *“competitive fairness”* – and safety if relevant – within the current format of their sport.

The review did, however, suggest three options to be considered by each governing body to support the inclusion of transgender athletes – the prioritisation of transgender inclusion, female



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and open category, and the creation of additional versions (universal admission). Furthermore, the Sports Councils will work with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) to find the optimal outcome for their sport. Education and training in policy development will be offered to facilitate best practice and the greatest opportunities for inclusion in sport.

For further information on the Group's findings, please search:

<https://equalityinsport.org/docs/300921/Guidance%20for%20Transgender%20Inclusion%20in%20Domestic%20Sport%202021.pdf>

I do recognise that this is a very sensitive issue, and I will be sure to relay your strength of feeling to my ministerial colleagues.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY