

# RUGBYSAFE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

## Transgender, Transsexual and Gender Dysphoria

Rugby union is a sport for all and the Rugby Football Union (RFU) seeks to ensure that anyone who wants to play the game should be able to do so without prejudice. Due to the physical nature of rugby, there are a number of considerations to be taken into account when transsexual and transgendered people participate in rugby activity. However, the RFU aims to support and provide the opportunity to anyone who wishes to play whatever their acquired gender.

Individuals who recognise themselves as transgender or transsexual should contact the RFU to discuss their specific case. Every situation will be reviewed on a case by case basis, including gender-affected issues such as the player's physical strength and stamina. Considerations as to whether the physique of an average person of one gender could put them at an advantage, or a disadvantage, compared to an average person of the other gender as competitors (players) in a match or in training need to be reviewed. The safety and equitable treatment of all taking part are the most important factors that need to be taken into account.

The RFU have a process in place to manage enquiries from, or about, people who have legally and medically acquired a change in their birth gender. Each individual case will be reviewed in accordance with the RFU Transgender Policy and an assessment will be carried out to determine the appropriate recommendations. This policy does not apply to transvestism. The RFU Transgender and Transsexual Policy can be found at: [www.englandrugby.com/about-the-rfu/rfu-inclusion-programmes/gender](http://www.englandrugby.com/about-the-rfu/rfu-inclusion-programmes/gender).

Gender dysphoria is where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. Although this does not technically fall within the policy, the RFU welcomes applications from individuals (or parents of individuals) who recognise themselves as having gender dysphoria and want to play rugby with players of the opposite legal gender. The application should include supporting documentation comprising a letter from a doctor/specialist confirming the condition, consent by parents (where applicable) and, ideally a supporting position from the club/school.

The RFU have supported a number of cases which have resulted in individuals now participating and enjoying playing rugby in a positive and supported environment. Where viewed appropriate for an individual to participate, it is important that there is good communication between the club/school, player, parent/guardian(s), coaches and other key personnel to ensure that the experience is a positive one for the player. This may include support through transition and agreeing the provision of changing facilities.

### Further Information

The Gender Trust (<http://gendertrust.org.uk/>) and Beaumont Society ([www.beaumontsociety.org.uk](http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk)) provide support and advice for transgender/transsexual people and their families. There is also information that clubs, coaches and/or teachers may find beneficial in providing appropriate support.



*Any advice provided by the RFU in relation to specific injuries, illnesses, conditions or disabilities is only general advice and it should not be used as a substitute for the individual advice patients receive when they consult their own doctor. Individuals are advised to consult their own General Practitioner or Hospital Consultant for specific advice on their condition and/or fitness to train for or play rugby.*

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