

Enjoy Water **Safely**



RLSS UK Transgender Inclusion Policy Position – Competitive Lifesaving Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)

Author: Lee Heard

Date: 27 April 2023

File Name: RLSS UK Transgender Inclusion Policy Position – Competitive Lifesaving v4.0

Registered Office: RLSS UK, Red Hill House, 227 London Road, Worcester, WR5 2JG

T: 0300 3230 096 | E: info@rlss.org.uk | rlss.org.uk

Control Sheet

Document Review

Name	Title
Lee Heard	Charity Director
Alan Sutherland and Teresa Myatt	Sport Action Group Representatives
SEDAG Representatives	SEDAG
Trustees	RLSS UK Trustee Board

Document Approval

Name	Title	Department	Signature	Date

Version History

Version	Amendment/Reason	Date
v1.0	Draft document	30/12/2022
V2.0	Draft Document	24/01/2023
V3.0	Draft Document	27/03/2023
V4.0	Published document	10/04/2023

Associated Documents

Document	Version

Review dates

It is RLSS UK's commitment to regularly review this position, between each major competition, in line with evolving national and international guidance and maintaining a view on feedback from members.

Introduction

We want Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) sport and activities to be in an environment where everyone can be themselves, where everyone can take part and where everyone is treated with kindness, dignity and respect.

Lifesaving activity is intended to replicate, demonstrate and develop the fitness and skills needed to save lives in the aquatic environment. It is also importantly a life skill - a skill that can be used for work, personal development, and in the pursuit of sporting excellence.

Whilst some elements of our activity aren't as physically demanding, lifesaving is a gender-affected sport/activity. As such it is the responsibility of RLSS UK as a National Governing Body to ensure that it provides a framework for fair competition and has due regard for the safety of all competitors, whilst also ensuring there is an opportunity for everyone to take part.

Gender reassignment as outlined in the UK's Equality Act 2010 is a protected characteristic and is a topic of much debate within sports, especially regarding the search for an acceptable balance of inclusivity and fairness.

The purpose of this document is to present a framework to support all involved in lifesaving activity to deliver fairness.

This document is intended for domestic use in the UK and Ireland. International sporting activity should be referred to policies outlined by the host nations and organisations (for example, ILSE, ILS, Commonwealth).

RLSS UK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Position Statement

RLSS UK is committed to the equal treatment and equality of opportunity for all its staff and volunteers, and by promoting Equality and Diversity will recognise, respect and value people's differences.

RLSS UK will openly promote an inclusive culture, fairness and respect through its network of Regions, Branches, Clubs, Approved Training Centres, staff and individuals.

In our work, we will not discriminate against any individual and we will take care to assess the impact of our policies and their implementation on race, religion and belief, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age equality.

Key Definitions

Gender reassignment

This is one of several protected characteristics defined in equality legislation (UK Equality Act 2010) and is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. This legislation prohibits discrimination against a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process, or part of a process, for reassigning their sex.

Transgender person

This describes someone with the protected characteristic (under the UK Equality Act 2010) of gender reassignment. We use the term transgender man/men to describe a female-to-male person and transgender woman/women to describe a male-to-female person.

Gender-affected activity

A gender-affected activity is a sport, game, or other activity of a competitive nature in circumstances in which the physical strength, stamina, or physique of average persons of one sex would put them at a disadvantage compared with average persons of the other sex as competitors in events involving the activity.

Background

Following a [report and guidance](#) finalised in September 2021 involving the five UK Sports Council, ten guiding principles emerged that are now leading the current approach to inclusion based on sex across sport.

One of the key conclusions of the report was that the inclusion of transgender people into female sport cannot be balanced regarding transgender inclusion and fairness in a gender-affected sport where there is meaningful competition. This is due to retained differences in strength, stamina and physique between a cisgendered woman compared with the a transgender woman or non-binary person assigned male at birth, with or without testosterone suppression. However, there is currently no scientific validation as to whether any parameters of physical capacity or ability can be defined with a certain cut-off point at which someone is considered appropriately 'female' or appropriately 'male'. Nor is it practical to carry out testing of this nature in a recreational, humanitarian sport such as lifesaving.

The science contained in the report changes the pre-existing narrative and confirms that allowing transgender women to participate in the female sport category of gender-affected sport/activity is not scientifically compatible to achieve parity and fairness for cisgendered females.

The research, guidance and principles that have emerged are based on adult sport and the approach involving children is still being considered.

RLSS UK's position to encourage fairness

In regard to competitive lifesaving sport, the overriding objective is and remains the guarantee of fair competition. RLSS UK has agreed on the following guidelines to be applied to a gender-affected activity. This should be applied by clubs and competition organisers.

- Any event that is gender-affected should include two distinct categories – Female (for those competitors assigned female at birth) and Open (for any competitor irrespective of sex).
- Any event that isn't gender-affected will continue to be run as Female and Male categories. In this circumstance self-identification of gender is acceptable.

On the final page of this document is a guide of gender-affected events.

RLSS UK will continue to reflect on our list of gender-affected activities based on further research, assessing the impact on our lifesavers and national/international policy.

List of Gender-Affected Individual Activities

Below is a list of common lifesaving events, this is a guide but the list is not exhaustive. For events outside of this list, it is the responsibility of the competition organiser to assess whether an event is gender-affected. Competition organisers should seek guidance from RLSS UK if they are unsure.

- Obstacles
- 50m Manikin Carry
- 100m Rescue Medley
- 100m Manikin Carry with Fins
- 100m Manikin Tow with Fins
- 200m Super Lifesaver
- Line Throw
- Swim and Tow

We encourage competition organisers to contact us about events. This will help with the consideration to evolve and enhance the list within the policy. If organisers are unsure about events or would like to suggest additions please contact competitions@rlss.org.uk

List of Gender-Affected Relay Activities

- 4 x 50m Obstacle Relay
- 4 x 25m Manikin Carry Relay
- Line Throw Relay
- 4 x 50m Medley Relay
- Pool Lifesaver Relay – Please note this is a mixed event. Teams must include two athletes from the Female Open Age category.

List of Non-Gender-Affected Activities

- Life Support Initiative Test
- Aquatic Initiative Test
- Simulated Emergency Response Competition (SERC)